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THE

PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

Of the late Right Honorable

HENRY ST. JOHN,

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

Publiſhed by DAVID MALLET, Eſq;

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LETTERS

OR

ESSAYS

ADDRESSED TO

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

ESSAY THE FIRST.

CONCERNING THE

NATURE, EXTENT, and REALITY

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

ESSAY

THE FIRST.

Mr. Harkei

CONCERNING

The Nature, Extent, and Reality of Human Knowledge.

SECTION I.

AMONG the many cavils, that have been deviſed againſt the demonſtrated exiſtence of a firſt, intelligent, ſelf-exiſtent cauſe of all things, this has been one, That things known muſt be anterior to knowledge; and that we may as well aſſert that the images of objects we ſee reflected made thoſe objects, as that knowledge, or intelligence made them. Hobbes is accuſed of reaſoning on this principle in his Leviathan, and his book De cive, by the author of the Intellectual ſyſtem of the univerſe; and his argument, in the place where he mentions the notions where reaſon dictates to us concerning the divine attributes, is thus ſtated. "Since knowledge, and intelligence are nothing more in us "than a tumult of the mind, excited by the preſ-"ſure of external objects on our organs, we muſt "not imagine there is any ſuch thing in God,

" theſe being things which depend on natural " cauſes." Now I think this charge a little too haſtily brought, and a little too heavily laid. So will every man who reads the context. HOBBES having ſaid that, when we aſcribe will to God, we muſt not conceive it to be in him what it is in us, but muſt ſuppoſe it to be ſomething analogous, which we cannot conceive; he adds, " in " like manner, when we attribute ſight, and o- " ther ſenſations, or knowledge, and intelligence, " to God, which are in us nothing more, than a " certain tumult of the mind, excited by the " preſſure of external objects on our organs, we " muſt not imagine that any thing like this hap- " pens to God." I am far from ſubſcribing to many notions which HOBBES has advanced. But ſtill the plain and obvious meaning of his paſſage, according to my apprehenſion, is not to deny that the Supreme Being is an intelligent being, but to diſtinguiſh between the divine and human manner of knowing. If HOBBES did not aſſert a diſtinct kind of knowledge, and attribute the ſame clearly to God almighty upon this occaſion, the omiſſion will not ſerve to fix the brand of atheiſm upon him. On the contrary, whatever his other opinions were, this opinion may be reconciled to the moſt orthodox theiſm. It is more reaſonable, and carries along with it a more becoming reverence, than the learned writer, who makes the objection, ſhews when, like other divines, he ſuppoſes clearly, by his reflections on this paſſage, and indeed by the whole tenor of his writings,

that

that intelligence and knowledge in God are the ſame as intelligence and knowledge in man; that the divine differs from the human in degree, not in kind; and that by conſequence, if God has not the latter, he has none at all.

Absurd and impertinent vanity! We pronounce our fellow animals to be automates, or we allow them inſtinct, or we beſtow graciouſly upon them, at the utmoſt ſtretch of liberality, an irrational ſoul, ſomething we know not what, but ſomething that can claim no kindred to the human mind. We ſcorn to admit them into the ſame claſs of intelligence with ourſelves, tho' it be obvious, among other obſervations eaſy to be made, and tending to the ſame purpoſe, that the firſt inlets, and the firſt elements of their knowledge, and of ours, are the ſame. But of ourſelves we think it not too much to boaſt, that our intelligence is a participation of the divine intelligence; that the mind of man, like that of God, contains in it the ideas of intelligible natures; that it does not riſe from particular to general knowledge, but deſcends from univerſals to ſingulars; hovers, as it were, aloft over all the corporeal univerſe; is independent of the bodies that compoſe it, or proleptical to them, and in the order of nature before them.

Such wild notions as theſe, or the magic of ſuch unmeaning ſounds, and articulated air, which the warm imaginations of Aſia and Africa firſt

produced, have been echoed down to the preſent age, and have been propagated with ſo much ſucceſs even in our northern and cold climates, that the heads of many reverend perſons have been turned by a preternatural fermentation of the brain, or a philoſophical delirium. None has been ſo more, I think, ſince the days of the latter Platoniſts, and the reign of the ſchoolmen, who may be called properly the latter Peripatetics, than that of the divine I have juſt now quoted. He read too much to think enough, he admired too much to think freely, and it is impoſſible to forbear wiſhing that he had taken due notice of a paſſage in TULLY's Offices, "Ne ut quidam "graeca verba inculcantes jure optimo ridea-"mur." Greek phraſeology was in faſhion among the Romans, as well as Greek philoſophy, in TULLY's days; and it is reaſonable to believe that many things paſſed then under a greek varniſh, that would not have paſſed ſo well in mere Latin: juſt as we may obſerve that many things have paſſed by the help of Greek and Latin among us, that would not have paſſed ſo well in mere Engliſh. TULLY reformed this pedantry indeed, but he did it rather with a view to enrich his language, than to determine his ideas; and he loſt little, or no advantage by the reformation: that advantage I mean, which men take, who affect to know more than they do know; from which affectation the Academicians, as much as they diſclaimed knowledge, were not free. He invented latin to anſwer greek words; and readers, like writers,

writers, being apt to imagine that every new word denotes ſomething new, this expedient, ſerved well enough to help out a ſyſtem, or to get rid of troubleſome objections. Thus vain phraſeology has been always called in to the aſſiſtance of vain philoſophy, and a learned miſt has been raiſed in order to ſurpriſe, and impoſe, or to eſcape. Theſe are ſome part of the arguties verbales, againſt which MONTAIGNE declaims: and, to ſpeak in his ſtyle, they may ſerve to enrich a man's tongue, but they will leave his underſtanding as poor as they found it, and much more perplexed.

I RETURN to the ſubject immediately before me, and I ſay, that, ſince there muſt have been ſomething from eternity, becauſe there is ſomething now, the eternal Being muſt be an intelligent Being, becauſe there is intelligence now: for no man will venture to aſſert that non-entity can produce entity, or non-intelligence, intelligence: and ſuch a Being muſt exiſt neceſſarily, whether things have been always as they are, or whether they have been made in time; becauſe it is no more poſſible to conceive an infinite, than a finite, progreſſion of effects without a cauſe. Thus the exiſtence of a God is demonſtrated; and cavil againſt demonſtration is impertinent. It is ſo impertinent, that he who refuſes to ſubmit to this demonſtration, among others of the ſame kind, has but one ſhort ſtep more to make in order to arrive at the higheſt pitch of abſurdity: for ſurely there is but one

one remove between a denial of the exiſtence of God, and a denial of our own exiſtence; becauſe, if we have an intuitive knowledge of the latter, we have the ſame intuitive knowledge of all thoſe ideas that connect the latter with the former in demonſtrating a poſteriori.

Now if the exiſtence of ſuch a Being can be demonſtrated, the atheiſt and the divine are both defeated. The atheiſt, becauſe the intelligence of this firſt cauſe of all things muſt have preceded all exiſtence, except his own, with which it is co-eternal. The divine, becauſe an eſſential difference is eſtabliſhed, in conſequence of this demonſtration, between God's manner of knowing, and that which he has been pleaſed to beſtow on his creatures. Human knowledge is not only poſterior to the human ſyſtem, but the very firſt elements of it are ideas which we perceive impreſſed by outward objects on our minds: and it will avail little to urge that our minds muſt be ſtill independent of outward objects, ſince we not only know what is, but can frame ideas of what may be, tho' it is not; becauſe every man who pleaſes may perceive that all the ideas he frames of what is not, are framed by the combinations he makes of his ideas of what is, and in no other manner, nor by any other means whatſoever. Thus then, if we could be ſuppoſed to know that there is an ideal world in the divine intellect, according to which this ſenſible world was made, yet ſtill the difference between the human and divine manner of knowing would admit of no compariſon.

But

But it was too preſumptious in Plato to aſſert that the Supreme Being had need of a plan, like ſome human architect, to conduct the great deſign, when he raiſed the fabric of the univerſe: and it is ſtill more preſumptuous to aſſert, not only that the divine intellect is furniſhed with ideas, like the human, and that God reaſons and acts by the help of them; but that your ideas and mine are God's ideas, and that the modifications, for that is the faſhionable term, of our minds are the modifications of God's mind. We talk indeed of the eternal ideas of the divine mind, and allude to our manner of knowing, that we may underſtand ourſelves and be underſtood by others the better; juſt as we are forced very often to employ corporeal images when we ſpeak of the operations of our own minds: but theſe expreſſions, ſo much abuſed by thoſe who are in the delirium of metaphyſical theology, have no intention to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe among men who preſerve their reaſon. If they had, they ſhould never be employed by me, ſince I ſhould think them profane as well as preſumptuous.

I should think them ſilly too, and mere cant: for as one difference between God's manner of knowing and ours ariſes from what we are able to demonſtrate concerning God; ſo there ariſes another from what we may know, if we ſhut our ears to the din of hard words, and turn our attention inwards, concerning man, and concerning theſe very ideas. Our knowledge is ſo dependent

pendent on our own ſyſtem, that a great part of it would not be knowledge perhaps, but error in any other. They who held, as I learn from doctor CUDWORTH that ſome philoſophers did hold, that "ſenſible ideas, and phantaſms "are impreſſed on the ſoul, as on a dead thing," maintained, no doubt, a great abſurdity. ARISTOTLE's opinion was more conformable to univerſal experience; for he aſſerted, according to SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that ſenſe was like the inſtrument, and intellect like the artificer; that ſenſe was firſt in the order of mental operations, but that intellect was firſt in dignity. Now this compariſon is juſt enough. We have internal as well as external ſenſe, mental as well as corporeal faculties, and active as well as paſſive powers, if you will allow paſſivity, as well as activity, to be included in the idea of power. But then, as our ſenſes are few, incapable of giving us much information, and capable of giving it falſely, unleſs we are on our guard againſt their deceptions; ſo the faculties of our mind are weak, and their progreſs towards knowledge not only ſlow, but ſo confined, that they are not able to carry it to the full extent of the ideas, about which they are converſant, and which they have all contributed to frame. We muſt conceive, as well as we can, the knowledge of the Supreme Being to be immediate, and abſolute. Knowledge in us is mediate by the intervention of ideas, not only as far as ſenſible objects are concerned, and that goes a great way; but in the whole. It is ſuch knowledge

ledge as we are fitted by the organization of our bodies, and the conſtitution of our minds, to acquire. It is ſuch as reſults from the relation eſtabliſhed between them and the ſyſtem to which they belong. It is knowledge for us. It is, in one word, human; and, relatively to us, when rightly purſued, real knowledge.

General ideas, or notions, ſuch as the mind frames by it's innate powers, ſuch as are ſaid to be architypes, and to refer to nothing beſides themſelves, may ſeem to be materials of axiomatical, ſcientifical, and, in a word, of abſolute, real knowledge. But even this boaſted knowledge is very precarious. Theſe ideas, or notions, are not taken with exactneſs from the nature of things on many occaſions; and the ſame affections, and imperfections of the mind, that corrupt the firſt, corrupt the ſubſequent operations of it. Ideas or notions are ill abſtracted firſt, and ill compared afterwards. The more complex, the more obſcure they are; and the more important, the more liable they are likewiſe to be abuſed by prejudices and habits that infect the mind, and put a wrong biaſs on it. But further; our progreſſion in this knowledge, ſuch as it is, ſtops always very ſhort of our aim. We ſoon want ideas, or want means of comparing thoſe we have, and it is in vain that we ſtruggle to get forward. It is in vain that we endeavour to force that barrier, which God has oppoſed to our inſatiable curioſity. To what purpoſe, indeed, ſhould we force

it,

it, if that was in our power, since we have reason to acknowledge, with the utmoſt gratitude to the author of our nature, that every thing neceſſary to our well-being in the ſtate wherein he has placed us, lies on the human ſide of this barrier; within that extent, I mean, where the operations of our minds are performed with eaſe and vigor, and are attended with the certainty of knowledge, or the ſufficient probability of opinion? Not only unattainable, but difficult, very often, is a term ſynonymous to unneceſſary; as we might prove, I think, by ſome examples drawn even from mathematical knowledge. In ſhort, the profound meditations of philoſophers, which we are ſo apt to admire before we have thought for ourſelves, have as much regard paid to them as they deſerve, when they are made the amuſements of men of ſenſe and leiſure; when they are uſed as exerciſe, without any other aim than to invigorate, and ſtrengthen the mind, and prepare it for ſomething more conducive to our happineſs, and therefore more properly our buſineſs.

"The good, the juſt, the meet, the wholeſome rules
Of temperance, and aught that may improve
The moral life." *

This ſhort account of human ideas, and human knowledge, no part of which can be applied, without blaſphemy and abſurdity, to the Supreme

* John Phillips.

Being,

Being, nor be denied, without folly and effrontery, of the human, is ſufficient, I ſuppoſe, to conſtitute another difference between God's manner of knowing and ours; a difference ariſing from thoſe imperfections and limitations of which every man is conſcious.

But it is now time to aſk, what then is the preciſe notion we are to entertain of the human mind? Shall we continue to think with ſome philoſophers antient and modern, that the ſoul, the rational ſoul, for they have given us more than one, is a ſpiritual and divine ſubſtance, "furniſhed with "forms, and ideas to conceive all things by, and "printed over with the ſeeds of univerſal know-"ledge, tho' the active energies of it are fatally "united to ſome local motions in the body, and "concurrently produced with them by reaſon "of the magical union between the ſoul and the "body?" Shall we ſay too that from this union all the imperfections of the human mind proceed, and that the perfection of our nature is, to be quite abſtracted from ſenſation, like the Janguis, or illuminated ſaints of the Indoſtan, whom BERNIER mentions? Shall we endeavour, like theſe philoſophers, by intenſeneſs of thought, by faſting, and other auſterities, to riſe up to the contemplation of the divinity, whom they aſſure that they ſee like a white, lively, ineffable light? Or ſhall we ſoften theſe pretenſions a little, and embrace the ſyſtem of a modern philoſopher *, who affirms

* MALEBRANCHE

that

that God is the place of ideas, as ſpace is of body, and that, this all-perfect mind containing the ideas of all created things, it is in God alone that we perceive every thing exterior to the ſoul? Shall we aſſume, like another philoſopher†, that our ideas are the only real ſenſible things; that we have no reaſon to imagine there are any ſubſtances, but active thinking ſubſtances; and that it is abſurd to aſcribe power to bodies, or to ſuppoſe any power but active power, any agent but ſpirit, or any actions of ſpirit without volition?

Who does not ſee all this to be as inconceivable, as that which it pretends to explain? Have the authors of ſuch ſyſtems, from Plato down to that fine writer Malbranche, or to that ſublime genius, and good man, the biſhop of Cloyne, contributed to make us better acquainted with ourſelves? I think not. They have done all, that human capacity can do, in a wrong method; but all they have done has been to vend us poetry for philoſophy, and to multiply ſyſtems of imagination. They have reaſoned about the human mind a priori, have aſſumed that they know the nature of it, and have employed much wit, and eloquence to account for all the phaenomena of it upon theſe aſſumptions. But the nature of it is as much unknown as ever; and we muſt deſpair of having any real knowledge at all about it, unleſs we will content ourſelves with that which is to be acquired a poſteriori. The

† Berkeley.

mind

mind of man is an object of phyſics as much, as the body of man, or any other body: and the diſtinction, that is made between phyſics and metaphyſics, is quite arbitrary. His mind is part of his nature, as well as his body: both of them together conſtitute his whole being: and as the firſt is the moſt noble part, I preſume, we ſhould determine his ſpecies by it principally, which we do not, if his mind was not more liable than his figure, to be confounded with that of other animals. Let us content ourſelves therefore to trace his mind, to obſerve it's growth, and the progreſs it makes from it's infancy to it's maturity. Let us be content with particular, and experimental knowledge, upon which we may found a few general propoſitions, ſuch as are or may be properly called axiomata media. But let us aim no longer at a general knowledge, too remote for our ſearch; nor hope to diſcover more of intellectual nature by internal ſenſe, than we are able to diſcover of corporeal nature by external. All that we can know of one and the other is, that we have ſuch and ſuch ſenſes, and ſuch and ſuch faculties, and that divers ſenſations of the body, and operations of the mind, are produced in them on ſuch and ſuch apparent occaſions.

SECT. II.

TO meaſure rightly our intellectual ſtrength, and to apply it properly, in order neither to impoſe, nor be impoſed upon, is our point of view. I ſhall not, therefore, ſay any thing further about the nature of mind in general, that ſecret ſpring of thought, unknown and unknowable; but ſhall content myſelf to obſerve, in Mr. LOCKE's method and with his aſſiſtance, ſomething about the phænomena of the human mind, by which we may judge ſurely of the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge. I ſay, we may judge ſurely of them; becauſe our ideas are the foundations, or the materials, call them which you pleaſe, of all our knowledge; becauſe, without entering into an enquiry concerning the origin of them, we may know ſo certainly, as to exclude all doubt, what ideas we have; and becauſe, when we know this, we know with the ſame certainty what kinds, and degrees of knowledge we have, and are capable of having.

THUS we know that the firſt ideas, with which the mind is furniſhed, are received from without, and are cauſed by ſuch ſenſations, as the preſence of external objects excites in us according to laws of paſſion and action, which the Creator has eſtabliſhed. What theſe laws are, and how external objects become able to make ſuch impreſſions on our organs, we know as little, and

it is impoſſible to know any thing leſs, as thoſe philoſophers do, who have pretended, moſt extravagantly, to explain theſe laws, and to account for theſe impreſſions; or as thoſe philoſophers know of another ſyſtem, who, denying, as extravagantly, that any ſuch power can belong to body, and affirming that it is abſurd to talk of paſſive power, confine all activity, and aſcribe all ſuch ideas of ſenſation to ſpirit alone. We are far from knowing how body acts on body, or ſpirit on ſpirit; how body operates on mind, and produces thought; or how mind operates on body, and produces corporeal motion. But this I know, that a leaf of wormwood conveys to my mind, by the ſenſe of ſight, and that of touch, for inſtance, the ideas of color, extenſion, figure, and ſolidity, as certainly as I know that it conveys thither, by the ſenſe of taſte, the idea of bitter; and as certainly as I know that the act of my mind, called volition, produced the motion of my hand which gathered the leaf. Our ignorance of cauſes does not hinder our knowledge of effects. This knowledge has been thought ſufficient for us, in theſe caſes, by infinite wiſdom: and nothing can be more ridiculous than to hear men affirm dogmatically, when they gueſs at moſt, and that very wildly, and very precariouſly.

As theſe ideas come to us from without, ſo there are others that ariſe in the mind, and proceed from the perception of it's own operations, to which a ſtill greater number is to be added,

that ariſe there from the concurrence of theſe joint cauſes, from perceptions of outward and inward operations, from external and internal ſenſe. Perception is the firſt faculty the mind exerts; and is common, whatever ſome of the others may be, to us and to the whole animal kind. The faculties that come in play afterwards ſeem to be active, but this ſeems to be paſſive; for we perceive ideas, however raiſed in the mind, whether we will or no: their eſſe is percipi; to have them we muſt perceive that we have them. Without this paſſive power, or this faculty, external objects might act upon us, but they would act to little purpoſe, for they would excite no ideas: as, on the other hand, without this action of external objects, the power or faculty of perception would be uſeleſs, or rather null, and by conſequence all the other powers or faculties of the mind.

THERE is nothing, philoſophically ſpeaking, at leaſt I could never find to my ſorrow that there is any thing, which obliges us neceſſarily to conclude that we are a compound of material and immaterial ſubſtance. If we are ſo, contrary to all appearances (for they denote plainly one ſingle ſyſtem, all the parts of which are ſo intimately connected, and dependent one on another, that the whole begins, proceeds, and ends together) this union of a body and a ſoul muſt be magical indeed, as doctor CUDWORTH calls it: ſo magical, that the hypotheſis ſerves to no purpoſe in philoſophy, whatever it may do in theology; and

is

is ſtill leſs comprehenſible, than the hypotheſis which aſſumes that altho' our idea of thought be not included in the idea of matter or body, as the idea of figure is, for inſtance, in that of limited extenſion; yet the faculty of thinking, in all the modes of thought, may have been ſuperadded by omnipotence to certain ſyſtems of matter: which it is not leſs than blaſphemy to deny; tho' divines and philoſophers, who deny it in terms, may be cited; and which, whether it be true or no, will never be proved falſe by a little metaphyſical jargon about eſſences, and attributes and modes.

But however this may be, concerning which it becomes men little to be as dogmatical, as they are on one ſide of this queſtion at leaſt; and whatever ſtrength and vigor, independent on the body, may be aſcribed to the ſoul, the ſoul exerts none till it is roufed into activity by ſenſe. A jog, a knock, a thruſt from without is not knowledge*. No, but if we did not perceive theſe jogs, knocks, and thruſts from without, we ſhould remain juſt as we came into the world, void even of the firſt elements of knowledge. Not only the inward, active powers of the mind would be unemployed, but we may ſay that they would be non-exiſtent. The human ſoul is ſo far from being furniſhed with forms and ideas to perceive all things by, or from being impregnated, I would rather ſay than printed over, with the ſeeds of

* Cudworth.

univerſal knowledge, that we have no ideas till we receive paſſively the ideas of ſenſible qualities from without. Then indeed the activity of the ſoul, or mind commences, and another ſource of original ideas is opened: for then we acquire ideas from, and by the operations of our minds. Senſation would be of little uſe to form the underſtanding, if we had no other faculty than meer paſſive perception; but without ſenſation theſe other faculties would have nothing to operate upon; reflection would have by conſequence nothing to reflect upon, and it is by reflection that we multiply our ſtock of ideas, and fill that magazine, which is to furniſh all the materials of future knowledge. In this manner, and in no other, we may ſay that "all our ideas ariſe "from our ſenſes;" and that "there is nothing "in the mind which was not previouſly in "ſenſe." But theſe propoſitions ſhould not be advanced, perhaps, as generally as they are ſometimes by logicians, leſt they ſhould lead into error, as maxims are apt to do very often. Senſation is the greater, reflection the ſmaller ſource of ideas. But theſe latter are as clear and diſtinct, and convey knowledge that may be ſaid to be more real than the former. Senſe gave occaſion to them, but they never were in ſenſe, properly ſpeaking. They are, if I may ſay ſo, of the mind's own growth, the elements of knowledge, more immediate, leſs relative, and leſs dependent, than ſenſitive knowledge; as any man will be apt to think, who compares his ideas

of

of remembring, recollecting, bare thought, and intenſeneſs of thought, with thoſe of warm and hot, of cool and cold. DES CARTES might have ſaid, "I ſee, I hear, I feel, I taſte, I ſmell; "therefore I am." But ſurely he might ſay too, "I think, I reflect, I will; therefore I am." Let us obſerve, however, that it belongs only to a great philoſopher to frame an argument to prove himſelf that he exiſts, which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and concerning which it is impoſſible he ſhould have any doubt*. In the mouth of any other perſon, "I think, there- "fore I am," would be very near akin to, "I "am, therefore I am."

THUS it will appear, when we contemplate our underſtanding in the firſt ſteps towards knowledge, that corporeal, animal ſenſe, which ſome philoſophers hold in great contempt, and which does not deſerve much eſteem, communicates to us our firſt ideas, ſets the mind firſt to work, and becomes in conjunction with internal ſenſe, by which we perceive what paſſes within, as by the other what paſſes without us, the foundation of all our knowledge. This is ſo evidently true, that even thoſe ideas, about which our reaſon is

* Je ne vois pas que vous ayez eu beſoin d'un ſi grand appareil, puiſque d'ailleurs vous étiez déjà certain de votre exiſtence, & que vous pouviez inferer la même choſe de quelque autre que ce fût de vos actions, étant manifeſte par la lumiere naturelle que tout ce qui agit eſt, ou exiſte. Objec. of GASSENDI to the ſecond Medit.

employed in the moſt abſtract meditations, may be traced back to this original by a very eaſy analyſe. Since theſe ſimple ideas therefore are the foundations of human knowledge, this knowledge can neither be extended wider, nor elevated higher, than in a certain proportion to them. If we conſider theſe ideas like foundations, they are extremely narrow, and ſhallow, neither reaching to many things, nor laid deep in the nature of any. If we conſider them like materials, for ſo they may be conſidered likewiſe, employed to raiſe the fabric of our intellectual ſyſtem, they will appear like mud, and ſtraw, and lath, materials fit to erect ſome frail, and homely cottage; but not of ſubſtance, nor value ſufficient for the conſtruction of thoſe enormous piles, from whoſe lofty towers philoſophers would perſuade us that they diſcover all nature ſubject to their inſpection, that they pry into the ſource of all being, and into the inmoſt receſſes of all wiſdom. But it fares with them, as it did with the builders in the plains of Senaar, they fall into a confuſion of languages, and neither underſtand one another, nor are underſtood by the reſt of mankind.

HAVING taken this view of our firſt, and ſimple ideas, it is neceſſary, in order to make a true eſtimate of human knowledge, that we take ſuch a view likewiſe of thoſe faculties by the exerciſe of which our minds proceed in acquiring knowledge. I have mentioned perception; and retention, or memory ought to follow: for as we ſhould

ſhould have no ideas without perception, ſo we ſhould loſe them as faſt, as we get them, without retention. When it was objected to DES CARTES, that, if thought was the eſſence of the ſoul, the ſoul of the child muſt think in the mother's womb; and when he was aſked, how then it came to paſs that we remember none of thoſe thoughts? He maintained, according to his uſual method, one hypotheſis by another, and aſſumed that memory conſiſts in certain traces made on the brain by the thoughts that paſs through it, and that as long as they laſt we remember; but that the brain of the child in the womb being too moiſt, and too ſoft to preſerve theſe traces, it is impoſſible he ſhould remember out of the womb what he thought in it. Thus memory ſeems to be made purely corporeal by the ſame philoſopher who makes it on ſome occaſions purely intellectual. He might diſtinguiſh two memories by the ſame hypothetical power, by which he diſtinguiſhed two ſubſtances, that he might employ one or the other as his ſyſtem required. If you conſult other philoſophers on the ſame ſubject, you will receive no more ſatisfaction: and the only reaſonable method we can take, is to be content to know intuitively, and by inward obſervation, not the cauſe, but the effects of memory, and the uſe of it in the intellectual ſyſtem.

BY this faculty then, whatever it be, our ſimple ideas, which have been ſpoken of already, are preſerved with greater, and our complex ideas, which

which remain to be ſpoken of, with leſs facility. Both one and the other require to be frequently raiſed in the mind, and frequently recalled to it. I ſay, with the reſt of the world, to be raiſed, and to be recalled; but ſurely theſe words come very ſhort of expreſſing the wonderful phænomena of memory. The images that are lodged in it preſent themſelves often to the mind without any freſh ſenſation, and ſo ſpontaneouſly, that the mind ſeems as paſſive in theſe ſecondary perceptions, as it was in receiving the firſt impreſſions. Our ſimple ideas, and even our complex ideas, and notions, return ſometimes of themſelves, we know not why, or how, mechanically, as it were, uncalled by the mind, and often to the diſturbance of it in the purſuit of other ideas, to which theſe intruders are foreign. On the other hand, we are able, at our will and with deſign, to put a ſort of force on memory, to ſeize as it were, the end of ſome particular line, and to draw back into the mind a whole ſet of ideas that ſeem to be ſtrung to it, or linked one with the other. In general; when images, eſſences, ideas, notions, that exiſted in any mind, are gone out of it, and have no longer any exiſtence there, the mind is often able to will them into exiſtence again, by an act, of which we are conſcious, but of which we know nothing more, than that the mind performs it. Theſe phenomæna are more ſurprizing, and leſs to be accounted for, than the action of external objects on the organs of ſenſe in the firſt production of ideas; which is an obſervation that deſerves

ſerves the notice of thoſe philoſophers, who deny ſuch action becauſe they cannot comprehend it.

But ſtill this faculty is proportioned to our imperfect nature, and therefore weak, ſlow, and uncertain in it's operations. Our ſimple ideas fade in the mind, or fleet out of it, unleſs they are frequently renewed: and the moſt tenacious memory cannot maintain ſuch as are very complex, without the greateſt attention, and a conſtant care, nor always with both. All our ideas in general are recalled ſlowly by ſome, and ſucceſſively by every mind. Themistocles was famous, among other parts wherein he excelled, for his memory; but when he refuſed the offer Simonides made him, it was, I ſuppoſe, becauſe he did not want the poet's ſkill to improve his memory, and becauſe he knew by experience that the great defects of this faculty are neither to be cured, nor ſupplied by art. In what proportion ſoever it is given, it may be improved to ſome degree, no doubt: but memory will never preſent ideas to the human mind, as it does perhaps to ſuperior intelligences, like objects in a mirror, where they may be viewed at every inſtant, all at once, without effort or toil, in their original freſhneſs, and with their original preciſion, ſuch as they were when they firſt came into the mind, or when they were firſt framed by it. Could memory ſerve us in this manner, our knowledge would be ſtill very imperfect; but many errors, into which we fall, and into which we are ſeduced, would be avoided.

ed, and the endleſs chicane of learned diſputation would be ſtopped in a great meaſure. It is for this reaſon I have ſaid ſo much of this faculty of the mind, as you will have occaſion ſoon to obſerve.

THE faculties neceſſary for my purpoſe to be mentioned next, are thoſe of compounding ſimple into complex ideas, and of comparing our ideas, which implies the juſt and nice diſcernment of them, in order to perceive the innumerable relations which they bear to one another. Theſe are ſome of the ſteps by which the mind attempts to riſe from particular to general knowledge. They have been called arts of the mind, but improperly, in ſome reſpects: for tho' the mind is forced to employ ſeveral arts, and to call in ſenſe to the aid of intellect, even after it has full poſſeſſion of it's ideas, to help out it's imperfect manner of knowing, and to lengthen a little it's ſhort tether; yet the compoſition, and compariſon of ideas is plainly a leſſon of nature: this leſſon is taught us by the very firſt ſenſations we have. As the mind does not act till it is rouſed into action by external objects; ſo when it does act, it acts conformably to the ſuggeſtions it receives from theſe impreſſions, and takes with it's firſt ideas the hints how to multiply, and improve them. If nature makes us lame, ſhe gives crutches to lean upon. She helps us to walk where we cannot run, and to hobble where we cannot walk. She takes us by the hand, and leads us by experience to art.

NATURE

NATURE then has united in diſtinct ſubſtances, as we commonly ſpeak, various combinations of thoſe qualities, each of which cauſes in us the ſenſation it is appropriated to cauſe, and our organs are fitted to receive; ſo that ſeveral being thus combined, and making their impreſſion together, may be ſaid to cauſe a complex ſenſation. Thus we receive, among other ideas, thoſe of ſoft and warm at the ſame inſtant, from the ſame piece of wax; or of hard and cold from the ſame piece of ice. Thus, again, we receive the more complex ideas, which ſubſtances ſtill more compoſed, that is, ſubſtances wherein a greater variety of theſe qualities co-exiſts, are fitted to raiſe in us; ſuch, for inſtance, as the idea of a man, or an horſe. As ſoon as we are born, various appearances preſent themſelves to the ſight, the din of the world ſtrikes our ears, in ſhort a multitude of impreſſions made on the tender organs of ſenſe convey a multitude of ideas ſimple and complex, confuſedly, and continually into the mind. The latter indeed, whether nature obtrudes them, or we make them, are compoſed of the former, and therefore we give very properly the firſt place to theſe in all diſcourſes concerning ideas. But they have a priority of order, rather than of exiſtence; for the complex idea of the nurſe comes into the mind as ſoon as the eyes of the child are opened, and is moſt probably the firſt idea received by the ſight, tho' the ſimple idea produced by the taſte of milk may have got into the mind a little ſooner. Nor does the leſſon of nature end here; ſhe carries

ries it on to all the different compoſitions of our ſimple ideas, and to all the different combinations we frame of our ſimple, and complex ideas; from ſubſtances to modes, the dependencies, and affections of ſubſtances; and from them to the relations of things one to another; that is, ſhe carries it on to all the operations of the mind, and to all the objects of our thoughts in the acquiſition of knowledge.

If I meant by modes nothing but manners of being, as ſome do, I ſhould not aſcribe our ideas of them to a further leſſon of nature. She taught us this leſſon, when ſhe obtruded on us the complex ideas of ſubſtances. At leaſt it ſeems ſo to me, who cannot comprehend the diſtinction of ſubſtance and of mode or manner of being, as of two ideas that may be perceived ſeparately, the one of a thing that ſubſiſts by itſelf, the other of a manner of being which cannot ſubſiſt by itſelf, but determines this thing to be what it is. I cannot conſider a mode without referring it in my mind to ſomething, of which it is or may be the mode: neither can I conſider a ſubſtance otherwiſe than relative to its modes, as ſomething whereof I have no idea, and in which the modes, of which I have ideas, ſubſiſt. The complex idea we have of every ſubſtance is nothing more, than a combination of ſeveral ſenſible ideas which determine the apparent nature of it to us. I ſay the apparent nature, and to us; for I cannot agree that theſe modes, ſuch of them as fall under our obſervation,

ſervation, limit the real nature, or determine even the apparent nature to other beings. On the whole it will appear, whenever we conſider this matter further, that the far greateſt part of what has been ſaid by philoſophers about being, and ſubſtance, indeed all they have advanced beyond thoſe clear and obvious notions, which every thinking man frames, or may frame without their help, is pure jargon, or elſe ſomething very trite, diſguiſed under a metaphyſical maſk, and called by an hard name, ontology, or ontoſophy.

But to proceed, or rather to return; I underſtand by mode, in this place, ſomething elſe, ſomething that carries our knowledge further, than the complex ideas of ſubſtances. I underſtand, in ſhort, what Mr. Locke underſtands by ſimple and mixed modes, the various combinations that our minds make of the ſame ſimple idea, and the various compoſitions that they make of ſimple ideas of different kinds. Theſe ideas, added to thoſe of ſubſtances, and the whole ſtock completed by ſuch as the mind acquires of the relations of it's ideas in comparing them as far as it is able to compare them, make up the entire ſyſtem of human knowledge: and in the proceſs of it from firſt to laſt we are aſſiſted directly or indirectly by the leſſons of nature that have been, or that are to be mentioned.

Ideas of things computable, and meaſurable, are the objects of mathematics. Ideas of moral, and immoral actions are the objects of ethics.

From

From whence has the mathematician his firſt ideas of number, or his firſt ideas of ſolid extenſion, of lines, ſurfaces, and figures? From whence has the moraliſt his firſt ideas of happineſs, and unhappineſs, of good and evil? The mind can exerciſe a power, in ſome ſort arbitrary, over all it's ſimple ideas, that is, it can repeat them at it's pleaſure, and it can frame them into complex ideas without any regard to actual, tho' with a regard to poſſible exiſtence; which regard will be always preſerved, unleſs the mind be diſordered. The mind then has a power of framing all the different compoſitions, and combinations of ideas, about which theſe ſciences are converſant: but yet theſe operations are not performed by the native energy of the mind alone, without any help, without any pattern. Nature lends the help, nature ſets the pattern, when complex ideas of theſe modes and relations force themſelves on the mind, as the complex ideas of ſubſtances do.

THAT every diſtinct object of external, and internal ſenſe gives us the idea of an unit, or of one, is obvious to reflection: and I think it is no leſs obvious that theſe objects ſuggeſt to the mind, nay oblige the mind to make, various repetitions of this idea, and to frame all the ſimple modes of number by adding unit to unit. Thus, for inſtance, we look up by day and we ſee one ſun, by night and we ſee one moon. PLUTARCH's countryman, indeed, counted two moons; for he could not conceive that the moon he had left behind him

him in Boeotia, and that he ſaw at Athens, were the ſame. But tho' we ſee but one ſun, and one moon, we ſee many ſtars. We attempt to count them, that is, we aſſign marks, or ſounds to ſignify how many times we repeat the idea of an unit, which each of them give us ſeparately; or elſe we form a confuſed idea of numberleſs repetitions of this idea, like the ſavages who lift up both hands, and extend their fingers to ſhew that they have been ten ſuns on their journey, or hold out an handful of their hair when they want to ſignify a number of ſuns; which they cannot ſignify otherwiſe, becauſe they have neither ſounds, nor marks for the greater collections of units.

As arithmetic is one, ſo is geometry another conſtituent part of mathematics, and the very name points out to us, not only the object, but the original of this ſcience. I do not believe, on the word of HERODOTUS, nor even of STRABO, that the Egyptians were the inventors of it. I believe this almoſt as little, as I believe, on the word of JOSEPHUS, that antediluvian aſtronomers had engraved their obſervations on two pillars which exiſted in his time. But this tradition, whereby the invention of geometry is aſcribed to a nation more antient than tradition itſelf, tho' it may be fabulous, communicates to us, like many others that are ſo, a true fact. The true fact, I think, is this; that, as ſoon as men ceaſed to range the woods and plains in common, like their fellow animals, if they ever did ſo; as ſoon as ſocie-

ties were formed, and in thoſe ſocieties a diviſion of property was made; nature, that led them to aſſign, led them to aſcertain poſſeſſions. They did both, moſt probably, at firſt by ſight, and gueſs. They paced out theſe poſſeſſions afterwards in length, and breadth; and ideas of modes of ſpace were framed like ideas of modes of number: an unit twelve times repeated makes a dozen, twenty times repeated it makes a ſcore. The length of one of their feet was, to theſe firſt geometricians, like an unit to the firſt arithmeticians. So many feet, five, I think, according to PLINY, made a pace, and one hundred and five and twenty of theſe made a ſtated meaſure of diſtance that continued long in uſe; for the ſtadium conſiſted of one hundred and twenty-five paces, according to the ſame author. Thus meaſuring, the practical part of geometry, came into uſe: and when it had been applied to two dimenſions, it was ſoon applied to all three. The uſe of it was great, not only in the firſt diſtribution of property, but in every alteration of it, and eſpecially after ſuch confuſions of it, as the inundations of the Nile might cauſe annually in Egypt, or other devaſtations in that and in other countries.

NATURE that urged men, by neceſſity, to invention, helped them to invent. The natural face of a country taught them to give it an artificial face; and their own firſt rude eſſays in laying out lands, and building habitations, led them to contemplate the properties of lines, ſurfaces, and

and ſolids; and little by little to form that ſcience, the pride of the human intellect, which has ſerved to ſo many great and good purpoſes, and the application of which is grown, or growing perhaps, into ſome abuſe. Nature ſet the example, example begot imitation, imitation practice, practice introduced ſpeculation, and ſpeculation in it's turn improved practice. I might eaſily run through other examples of the ſame kind, to ſhew how the firſt principles of arts and ſciences are derived from ideas furniſhed by the productions, and operations of nature, ſuch as our ſenſes repreſent them to us; nay, how inſtinct inſtructs reaſon, the inſtinct of other animals the reaſon of man. But this would be ſuperfluous trouble in writing to you, who have touched this ſubject ſo well, where you introduce nature ſpeaking to man, in the third of your ethic epiſtles.

I WILL only mention, as I propoſed to do, the ideas, or notions, about which moral philoſophy is converſant. I diſtinguiſh here, which I ſhould have done perhaps ſooner, and I think with good reaſon, between ideas, and notions; for it ſeems to me, that as we compound ſimple into complex ideas, ſo the compoſitions we make of ſimple and complex ideas may be called, more properly. and with leſs confuſion and ambiguity, notions, Simple ideas, ſimple modes, complex ideas, mixed modes, and relations of all theſe, as well as the relations of the relations, are frequently blended together voluntarily, as uſe invites, or judg-

ment directs; and, thus blended, they may therefore ſeem to be original, and untaught. But yet certain it is, that ſuch notions as theſe obtrude themſelves on the mind as naturally and as neceſſarily, tho' not ſo directly nor immediately, as the complex ideas of ſubſtances, or any other complex ideas. Let us obſerve this in an example. We ſee one man kill another: and the complex idea, ſignified by the word kill, is obtruded on our ſenſe as much, as the complex idea of the man killed, or of his killer. The mind retains this image, and joining to it various ideas of circumſtances and relations, of cauſes and effects, of motives and conſequences, all which ideas have been raiſed in our minds by experience and obſervation, ſuch notions as we intend by the words murder, aſſaſſination, paricide, or fratricide are framed.

NATURE teaches us, by experience and obſervation, not only to extend our notions, but to diſtinguiſh them with greater preciſion; juſt as we learn to rectify ſimple ideas of ſenſation, and to control ſenſe by ſenſe, if I may ſay ſo. Mr. LOCKE obſerves that we learn firſt the names of theſe complex ideas and notions from other men, and the ſignification of them afterwards. Which is true; and it is the moſt early, and moſt common method whereby we acquire them. But this makes no alteration in the caſe. Whether the impreſſions that excited theſe complex ideas, and gave the mind occaſion and means to form theſe notions,

notions, were made on our minds, or on the minds of other men; and whether the names that ſignify them were given by us, or by others, it is plain that nature taught mankind to make them, directly when ſhe obtruded them, and indirectly when we ſeemed to invent them without any aſſiſtance from outward objects. The firſt is evident of itſelf, and the ſecond will appear ſo too, if we conſider that in learning their names, and the ſignification of theſe names, we learned to decompound them; and that by learning to decompound ſome, the mind was inſtructed to compound others, even ſuch, perhaps, as exiſted by theſe means in idea and notion, before the combinations, whereof they became the architypes, exiſted in act. Our ideas of relations, and of the relations of relations, which are comprehended ſo often in our complex ideas, or notions, are not poſitive beings that exiſt by themſelves, and can be contemplated by themſelves. Modes are the affections and dependencies of ſubſtances; relations are the affections and dependencies of ſubſtances and modes; and no one of them can exiſt any longer than both the ideas that produced it, or by the compariſon of which it was framed, ſubſiſt. It might ſeem therefore the leſs likely that outward objects ſhould communicate ſuch ideas to the mind, or even inſtruct the mind to frame them; and yet ſo it is. That act of the mind, that ſets two objects before our internal ſight, and by referring from one to the other includes both in the ſame conſideration, is plainly ſuggeſted to us by the opera-

tions of outward objects on our ſenſes. We can neither look up, nor down, without perceiving ideas of bigger and leſs, of more and fewer, of brighter and darker, and a multitude of other relations, the ideas of which ariſe in the mind as faſt as the ideas of things of which they expreſs the relations, and almoſt prevent reflection. When the mind, thus taught, employs reflection, the number of theſe relative ideas increaſes vaſtly. Thus, for inſtance, when we obſerve the alterations that are made by nature, or by art, in our complex ideas of ſubſtances, or when we reflect on the continual viciſſitude and flux of all the affections, and paſſions, and the conſequences of them, how can we avoid framing the ideas of cauſe and effect? That which produces, or ſeems to us to produce the alteration, gives us the idea of cauſe, and that which receives the alteration gives us the idea of effect. I go no further into the conſideration of our ideas of relations phyſical, and moral. They are numberleſs, and they muſt needs be ſo; ſince every idea, or notion we have, tho' it be in itſelf one ſingle object of thought, becomes the object of a thouſand when it is compared with all thoſe with which it may be compared in ſome reſpect or other.

SECTION III.

THESE, and ſuch as theſe are all the ideas we have really, and are capable of having, derived originally from ſenſe, external and internal. Theſe too, and ſuch as theſe, are the faculties, by which

which we improve and increaſe our ſtock: and ſuch as all theſe are, ſuch muſt our knowledge be; for ſince human knowledge is nothing elſe than the perception of the agreement or diſagreement, connection or repugnancy of our ideas, thoſe that are ſimple muſt determine the nature of thoſe that are complex; thoſe that are complex that of our notions; our notions that of the principles we eſtabliſh; and that of the principles we eſtabliſh that of all the conſequences we draw from them. Error, in any one ſtep of this gradation, begets error in all that follow: and tho' we compare ever ſo exactly, conclude ever ſo truly, and in a word, reaſon ever ſo well, our reaſoning muſt terminate in error whenever this happens. It cannot terminate in knowledge. But before I leave this ſubject I muſt go over it again, that I may carry the reflections upon it further.

How inadequate our ideas are to the nature of outward objects, and how imperfect therefore all our knowledge is concerning them, has been obſerved tranſiently above, and has been too often and too well explained to be over much inſiſted on by me. That there are ſuch objects, material objects, neither ſpirits nor ideas, and that they act on one another and on us in various manners, and according to various laws, no man can doubt any more, than he can doubt of that perception, by which he diſtinguiſhes their preſence and their abſence according to the difference between the ideas they excite in one caſe, and thoſe he retains

in the other. We can doubt of this, I think, no more than we can doubt whether we are free agents, or whether we are neceſſarily determined to all we do; no more than we can doubt of many other things of which philoſophers have pretended to doubt, or have really doubted: for, either they have meant on many occaſions to exerciſe their wit, and to triumph in the ſubtilty of their genius; or they have been tranſported by over-heated imaginations into a philoſophical delirium. The firſt have perplexed knowledge more than they have improved it: and if the laſt have not made many converts whilſt they have argued againſt ſelf-evidence, they have multiplied uſeleſs diſputes, and miſpent much time.

Here then, at our firſt ſetting out in the ſurvey of knowledge, we find an immenſe field in which we cannot range, no nor ſo much as enter beyond the out-ſkirts of it: the reſt is impenetrable to us, and affords not a ſingle path to conduct us forward. Could we range in that field, we ſhould be unable to walk in our own. I mean, that if our ſenſes were able to diſcover to us the inmoſt conſtitutions, and the real eſſences of outward objects, ſuch ſenſes would render us unfit to live and act in the ſyſtem to which we belong. If the ſyſtem was not made for us, who pretend on very weak grounds, I think, to be the final cauſe of it, we at leaſt were made for the ſyſtem, and for the part we bear among terreſtrirl animals. Other creatures there may be, and, I believe readily, there

there are, who have finer ſenſes than men, as well as ſuperior intelligence to apply and improve the ideas they receive by ſenſation. The inmoſt conſtitutions, the real eſſences of all the bodies that ſurround them, may lie conſtantly open to ſuch creatures; or they may be able, which is a greater advantage ſtill, ſo "to frame, and ſhape "to themſelves organs of ſenſation, as to ſuit "them to their preſent deſign, and the circum-"ſtances of the object they would conſider," according to that ſuppoſition, which Mr. LOCKE calls an extravagant conjecture of his, but which that great man might very reaſonably make; ſince it aſſumes no more than this, that ſome other creatures are able to do by their natural conſtitution, and ſo as to obtain full and abſolute knowledge, what we are able to do by art very imperfectly, and yet ſo as to attain a greater degree of partial and relative knowledge, than our ſenſes, unaſſiſted by art, could communicate to us.

BUT be this as it will, concerning which we can only gueſs; it is, I think, evident that altho' outward objects make impreſſions on the organs of ſenſe, and may be ſaid therefore to cauſe ſenſations, yet theſe ſenſations are determined in the whole animal kind, that we know, and to which we belong, according to the conſtitutions of the ſeveral ſpecies; as theſe conſtitutions are framed according to the uſes and ends for which each ſpecies is deſigned, and to which it is directed. Innumerable inſtances might be brought to illuſtrate,

ſtrate, and confirm this truth. It will be ſufficient to do ſo by making a few ſhort obſervations on our own ſpecies alone. The ſame outward objects, then, produce the ſame ſenſations in all men, as far as ſelf-preſervation is immediately concerned: and there is at leaſt an apparent uniformity of ſenſations in all other caſes, ſufficient to maintain the commerce of men one with another, to direct their mutual offices without confuſion, and to anſwer all the ends of ſociety. Further than to theſe purpoſes, the determination of their ſenſations does not ſeem to be in all men the ſame. The ſame objects ſeem to cauſe different, and oppoſite ſenſations in many particular inſtances, in as much as they give pleaſure, and excite deſire in one man, whilſt they give no pleaſure, nor excite any deſire, nay whilſt they give pain, and provoke averſion in another. All men feel alike the effects of fire that burns, or of ſteel that divides their fleſh: and my butler, who has taſted both, will not bring me a bottle of wormwood-wine when I aſk for a bottle of ſack. But yet the Greenlander quaffs his bowl of whale's greaſe with as much pleaſure, as you and I drink our bowl of punch: and if his liquor appears nauſeous to us, ours appears ſo to him. Habit, that ſecond nature, may ſometimes account, as well as ſickneſs, for this difference that ſeems to be in human ſenſations. But ſtill it will remain true that this difference in many, and various inſtances, proceeds from our firſt nature, if I may ſay ſo; that is, from a difference in the original conſtitution of

thoſe

thoſe particular bodies in which this apparent difference of ſenſation is perceivable. The principle of this diverſity is as unknown to us, as the more general principle of uniformity: but whether it be laid in the natural conſtitution, or in the alterations that habit or ſickneſs may produce, our obſervation will be verified, that human ſenſations are determined by the actual diſpoſition, whether original or accidental, of human bodies, and cannot therefore help to communicate to us any knowledge of the inward conſtitutions, or real eſſences of the bodies which excite them, nor indeed any knowledge but of themſelves. To diſcover in what manner, and by what powers, external action and internal paſſion co-operate to produce ſenſation, it is in vain to attempt: and a philoſophical mind will be much better employed in admiring and adoring the divine wiſdom, that appears equally in the diverſity, and in the uniformity of our ſenſations, as it would not be hard to ſhew if this was a place for thoſe reflections; than in ſuch vain reſearches. Vain indeed they will appear to be to any man of ſenſe, who conſiders with attention, and without prepoſſeſſion, what has been writ on this ſubject by men of the greateſt genius.

But as vain as theſe reſearches are, and as impoſſible as it is to know more of our ſenſations, than that we have them, and that we receive them from outward objects; yet we are not to think the uſe of our ſenſes as limited, as Malbranche would

would have us believe it to be. They were given*, he ſays, for the preſervation of our bodies, and not to teach us truth. The firſt part of this aſſertion is agreeable to the ſyſtem of nature. The latter is agreeable, I think, to no ſyſtem but that of his own imagining, which is ſo extravagantly hypothetical in many, and the principal parts, that it has made no great fortune in the world, tho' the utmoſt ſubtilty of wit, and all the powers of language are employed to ſupport it. Notwithſtanding, therefore, ſuch ſyſtems as theſe, for it is not ſingle of its kind, we may continue to believe, what conſtant experience dictates to us, that our ſenſes, tho' few, confined, and fallible, are given not only for the preſervation of our bodies, but to let into the human mind the firſt elements of knowledge, and to aſſiſt, and direct the mind in all the progreſs it makes afterwards.

That human knowledge is relative, not abſolute, has been ſaid already. We neither do, nor can know the real eſſence of any one ſubſtance in the world, nor of our own: and when we talk of the powers and qualities, and ſometimes of the natures of ſubſtances, either we talk ignorantly, or we refer to their effects, by which alone we diſtinguiſh them, and in which alone we know any thing of them. They who diſtinguiſh between the primary, and ſecondary qualities of ſubſtances, do not ſo much as pretend that the

* Recherche de la verité, L. i. c. 10.

ſecondary

ſecondary qualities, ſuch as colors, or taſtes, for inſtance, are any repreſentations of the outward exiſtences that cauſe them: and the diſputes about ſolidity, extenſion, and motion, which is mobility in action, as mobility is motion in power, ſhew how inadequate our ideas are of the primary qualities; tho' theſe are ſaid to be reſemblances of paterns really exiſting in all bodies whether we perceive them or not.

But tho' the knowledge here ſpoken of be not complete, nor abſolute, becauſe our ideas, concerning which alone human knowledge is converſant, are inadequate to the nature of things; yet it is real knowledge in ſome degree, and relatively to us. This I mean: Our ſimple ideas, whoſe various co-exiſtences compoſe all our complex ideas of ſubſtances, are certainly adequate in this ſenſe; they are real effects of real powers, and ſuch as the all-wiſe Author of nature has ordained theſe powers to produce in us. I ſay in us, for it is not incongruous to ſuppoſe, nor will theſe ideas be leſs adequate, nor this knowledge leſs real, if it be ſo, that the ſame powers may be ordained to produce other effects on other creatures of God. This paper gives me the idea that I call white; it may give ſome other idea to ſome other creature. Theſe ideas are different, but they are both adequate to our uſe, and the knowledge real; for they are both real, and natural effects of real, correſponding powers.

As

As low as theſe principles of any real knowledge, that we can acquire of ſubſtances, are laid, it is from them we muſt take our riſe: and there is no wonder therefore if we proceed ſlowly, and have not been able to proceed far, even ſince the ſtudy of nature has been purſued in a right method. Whilſt the ſymbolical phyſics of Pythagoreans and Platoniſts prevailed, and whilſt natural philoſophy was made to conſiſt in little elſe than a logical cant, which ARISTOTLE invented, and his diſciples propagated, error was cultivated inſtead of ſcience, ignorance was maſked, and men paſſed for naturaliſts without any knowledge of nature. The caſe would be much the ſame if ſome modern philoſophers could have ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing a ſuppoſed ſcience, that they call metaphyſics, to be like an higher ground, from which we might deſcend to phyſics, from generals to particulars, from ſpeculations about what may be, down to affirmations about what is. But there have been men ſince the reſurrection of letters, at the head of whom our VERULAM juſtly claims his place, who have delivered common ſenſe from the chains of authority; and, by expoſing antient, have put us on our guard againſt many of thoſe modern whimſies. The generality of philoſophers, therefore, have been far from adopting this inverted rule, this unnatural method of ſtudying nature. They have ſeen not only that laborious induſtry is the price impoſed on all our acquiſitions of knowledge, but that natural knowledge, the knowledge, I ſhould ſay, of the

the ſyſtem of nature, can never be real, unleſs it be begun, and carried on by the painful drudgery of experiment. Extunditur uſu.

By experiments well made, for they too may be made ill, theſe men have acquired a knowledge of ſome particular ſubſtances, of thoſe at leaſt which are neareſt to them, which they can handle, and even torture at their pleaſure, and force, if I may ſay ſo, to give them information. The knowledge I mean is that of the ſenſible qualities and powers co-exiſting in each particular ſubſtance: and this is real knowledge as far as it goes, according to what has been explained above. When a multitude of particular ſubſtances are thus known, and thus diſtinguiſhed, philoſophers venture to frame general propoſitions concerning them, and concerning others too by the help of analogy: and when the propoſitions, and the concluſions drawn from them are confirmed by uniform experience, they acquire a probability almoſt equivalent to certainty, and which muſt be accepted for it. This, however, is not ſtrictly knowledge. The naturaliſt, who has made a thouſand experiments with the utmoſt care and ſkill; the chemiſt, who has, in like manner, decompoſed a thouſand natural, and compoſed as many artificial bodies, are ſtill liable to be deceived; becauſe it may happen that the action of one particular body ſhall not produce ſometimes the ſame effects, which the action of other bodies of the ſame ſpecific appearance has produced

produced on innumerable trials. Our real knowledge goes no further than particular experiment: and as we attempt to make it general, we make it precarious. The reaſon is plain. It is a knowledge of particular effects that have no connection, nor dependency one on another, even when they, or more properly the powers that produce them, are united in the ſame ſubſtance: and of theſe powers conſidered as cauſes, and not in their effects, we have no means of attaining any knowledge at all. It may be that bodies act on one another according to their bulk, figure, and texture of their ſolid parts, by motion and pulſion, or gravity and attraction. It may be that their action proceeds from other cauſes, ſo remote from all human conception, that we are unable not only to gueſs at them, but even to ſuſpect that they are. But whatever they be, ſince they are neither known nor knowable by us, what have philoſophers to do more, than to redouble their induſtry in multiplying experiments as much, as they have means and opportunities of doing, ſince there may be a deficiency, but never an exceſs of them? Thus they may proceed in obtaining knowledge of particular ſubſtances by the help of their ſenſes, and in improving and applying this knowledge to greater advantage by the help of their intellect. Senſe and intellect muſt conſpire in the acquiſition of phyſical knowledge; but the latter muſt never proceed independently of the former. Experiment is that pillar of fire, which can alone conduct us to the promiſed land: and

they,

they, who loſe ſight of it, loſe themſelves in the dark wilds of imagination. This many have done from the infancy of philoſophy, which has laſted longer than we are apt to imagine; and which, one might be tempted to think on ſome occaſions, continues ſtill, by a fondneſs to retain ſome of the rattles and baubles of early ages. Theſe rattles, and baubles have been laid aſide, however, by no philoſophers ſo much, as by thoſe who have applied themſelves to cultivate experimental phyſics: and therefore as imperfect as our knowledge of nature is, and muſt be always, yet has it been more advanced within leſs than two centuries, than it had been in twenty that preceded them.

All the helps, that human wit and induſtry can procure, have been employed. Microſcopes and teleſcopes have been invented. Geometry has been applied to natural philoſophy, and algebra to geometry. With all theſe helps, our knowledge of nature has advanced in degree, but not in kind. There are microſcopical corpuſcles in bodies, as there are teleſcopical ſtars in the heavens, neither of which can be diſcovered without the help of one, or the other, of theſe glaſſes. But, with this help, we can no more diſcover all the corpuſcles of any one body, than we can all the ſtars of the univerſe: and beſides, as to the former, if glaſſes could magnify enough to expoſe them all to our ſight, we ſhould know indeed more component particles of bodies, but we ſhould remain as ignorant of their mechanical affections,

as we are now: becauſe we ſhould remain ignorant of the mechanical affections of theſe corpuſcles, or of that inward ſpring which puts theſe atoms into motion, and directs their ſeveral operations.

As to the celeſtial bodies which are objects of aſtronomical obſervation, they muſt be reckoned objects of natural philoſophy likewiſe; ſince they are parts of the ſame univerſal ſyſtem of nature. We take up the teleſcope, indeed, and not the microſcope, to contemplate them, becauſe they are at ſuch immenſe diſtances from us: and we are ſo little concerned to know of what ſubſtances they are compoſed, or what ſubſtances they contain, that, if we were not hindered by the utter impoſſibility, we might be ſo by the apparent inutility, from attempting to acquire any ſuch knowledge of them, as we labor to acquire of the outward objects that environ us in our own planet. This planet is our home, and it imports us to know as much as we can of the inward ſtructure and furniture of it. We have not the ſame concern about other habitations. But it is agreeable, and in ſome reſpects uſeful, to know the general face of the country about us. It is probable that mere curioſity begat aſtronomy: and that the uſes, to which this noble ſcience is applicable, were diſcovered afterwards. I am apt to think that the firſt men were excited more to phyſical reſearches by the ſhining phænomena of the heavens, than by thoſe of the earth. Their wants forced them to look down; but as the moſt immediate

immediate of theſe were ſupplied, they began to look up again: and the men who had leaſt to do, egyptian, or chaldean ſhepherds, perhaps, were the firſt aſtronomers. But, as mean and rude as the beginnings of it were, aſtronomy was ſoon cultivated by the moſt learned men, and by the greateſt princes, if we believe the traditions of antiquity concerning BELUS, ATLAS, and others, to have had any foundation in the truth of things. Thus much is ſure, it has been cultivated many thouſands of years, and wherever arts and ſciences have flouriſhed this ſcience has flouriſhed at the head of them.

IT is lawful, methinks, to conclude from hence, that a ſcience, which it has been the buſineſs of learned men in all countries, where learning has flouriſhed, to advance, would have been brought to a great degree of perfection, if there had been any near proportion between the object of it and human means of knowledge. But as ſome bodies baffle our enquiries, and eſcape our knowledge by being too minute, theſe enormous maſſes do the ſame by being too remote. Our ſenſe of ſight fails us; and when our ſenſes fail us in natural philoſophy, whoſe object is actual not poſſible exiſtence, our intellect is of little uſe. It may be ſaid, it will be ſaid, that our knowledge of the heavenly bodies is brought to a great degree of perfection, and is going on daily to a greater, by the inceſſant labors of many learned men; that we have a much more extenſive, a more exact,

and a truer view of the phænomena than ever, by the vaſt advances that have been made in every part of mathemathics; that we calculate their magnitudes, meaſure their diſtances, determine their figures, deſcribe their orbits, compute the degrees of their velocity, and perform a multitude of other operations concerning them, the reſult of every one of which is knowledge, with the utmoſt accuracy. It will be added, that we are not only thus able to account for appearances, but that we penetrate into the phyſical cauſes of them, that we diſcover the forces by which theſe bodies act on one another, the laws of their motion, and of their direction, by which the order and harmony of the whole ſyſtem is governed and maintained.

THIS may be ſaid, and more to the ſame effect, without contradiction on my part; for it is true in the main, truer than panegyric is generally. But ſtill I apprehend, that when we conſider the whole matter, as it muſt be conſidered to make a true eſtimate of the extent of this knowledge, that is, when we compare the objects of this ſcience with the progreſs that has been made in it by the united labors of mankind, we ſhall find much more reaſon to admire the induſtry, and perſeverance of philoſophers, than to applaud their ſucceſs. What do we know beyond our ſolar ſyſtem? We know indeed juſt enough to give us nobler, and more magnificent ideas of the works of God, than antient philoſophy could ſuggeſt. We know that this ſyſtem, to which our planet

planet belongs, and beyond which men did not carry their thoughts antiently nor ſuſpect any other, is but a minute part of the immenſe ſyſtem of the univerſe, of the τὸ πᾶν, as you Greeks, I think call it. But as to any particular knowledge that we have, or even imagine that we have, it is next to nothing. Well may we be thus ignorant of all the ſolar ſyſtems beyond our own, the very phænomena of which, except the twinkling of ſome of their ſuns and our fixed ſtars, are imperceptible to human ſight; when there are ſo many phænomena in our own ſolar ſyſtem, for which we cannot account, and ſo many others, probably, that we have not yet diſcovered; when there are, even in that of the earth we inhabit, ſo many things that have hitherto eſcaped the utmoſt penetration of our ſenſes, and the utmoſt efforts of our intellect, with all the aſſiſtance that art can give to both. We cannot trace the courſe of comets, for inſtance, thro' all their oblique orbits: but can we trace the circulation of water that falls on our earth in rain, or that riſes in ſprings? "Veniet tempus," ſays SENECA in the ſeventh book of his Natural queſtions, "quo "iſta, quæ nunc latent, in lucem dies extrahet; "et, longioris ævi diligentia, veniet tempus, quo "poſteri noſtri tam aperta nos neſciſſe mirentur." This time may come, perhaps; but, if we judge of what is to come by what is paſt, we may be tempted to think that the revolution of the platonic year will be complete as ſoon.

THE progreſs of a ſcience, which, like this of

natural philoſophy, is the work of ages, muſt be liable, as it has been and will be, to various interruptions. The ground that has been gained will be frequently loſt. The lateſt ſyſtems or hypotheſes may not be always the trueſt: and when they are ſo, the advancement of ſcience may not be accelerated by them as much, as it has been retarded by thoſe that were falſe. In a word, I do not believe that SENECA would be ſo much ſurpriſed, if he roſe from the dead, as we may imagine, at the progreſs that has been made ſince his days. What further progreſs will be made depends on many contingencies, and it is hard to ſay. But this is ſure, that altho' knowledge acquired facilitates the acquiſition of more to a certain point, yet the progreſs we attempt to make beyond that point grows more and more difficult, and becomes a little ſooner, or a little later, quite impracticable: for nothing can be truer in phyſics, as well as in thoſe general reaſonings which are called metaphyſics, than what MONTAIGNE has ſaid, " les extremités de notre perquiſition " tombent toutes en éblouiſſement."

LET us carry theſe reflections one ſtep further, and we ſhall have carried them as far, as is neceſſary to ſhew how little we are fitted to acquire the knowledge to which we aſpire, and which we ſometimes pretend that we have, concerning bodies either terreſtrial or celeſtial. To inveſtigate truth with ſucceſs, in mathematics, in natural philoſophy, and indeed on every occaſion where it is difficult to be found, the analytic method muſt be

employed not only in the firſt place, but as far as it can be employed, about the objects of our enquiry. It has been much improved, and it has been thus employed, by the moderns. Many of them have been careful to make all the obſervations and experiments in their power, and from them they have drawn general concluſions by induction. This now is the utmoſt that our nature, and the nature of things without us, admit to be done: and when it is ſo well done, that no objection, drawn from experience, can be made to theſe concluſions, they have a right to be placed in the rank of things known by us. But let us not be miſtaken: Tho' this be human, it is not abſolute knowledge, becauſe it is not founded in abſolute certainty. Further diſcoveries of the phænomena may contradict theſe concluſions: or, ſuppoſing no ſuch diſcoveries to be made, other concluſions may be deducible from the ſame phænomena, or other cauſes of them may be aſſignable, for aught we know. So far is this method of reaſoning from particular obſervations and experiments to general concluſions, by induction, from amounting to real demonſtration, tho' it be the beſt in our power.

This is the caſe when the minds of men are bent ſolely to the diſcovery of truth. But ſomething worſe happens when human affections and paſſions mingle in their enquiries, as they often do; for philoſophers are not free from them. The Stoics themſelves, with all their boaſted apathy, were as little ſo as any other men. When this hap-

pens, philoſophers haſten too much from the analytic to the ſynthetic method, that is, they draw general concluſions from too ſmall a number of particular obſervations, and experiments: or, without giving themſelves even this trouble, they aſſume cauſes and principles before eſtabliſhed, as if they were certain truths, and argue from them. Nothing can be more abſurd than theſe proceedings. It is agreed, I think, out of the ſchools at leaſt, that ARISTOTLE was eminently guilty of them; for he dealt more in common notions, than experiments, and built a world with catagories, that is, by a certain logical arrangement of words: and yet even ARISTOTLE ſeems to have warned philoſophers againſt this abuſe; for he taught, according to the report of SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that they ſhould not neglect ſenſe and ſeek for reaſons, "poſthabito ſenſu quæ-"rere rationem;" that is, that they ſhould not carry ſpeculation further than experiment and obſervation authoriſe it firſt, and confirm it afterwards. The principal reaſons of a contrary conduct may be found in lazineſs, and vanity; in the firſt ſometimes, in the other always. Philoſophers have found it more eaſy, and more compendious to imagine, than to diſcover; to gueſs, than to know. They have taken, therefore, this way to fame, which has been their object, at leaſt, as much as truth: and many a wild hypotheſis has paſſed for a real ſyſtem.

STRATO was a famous philoſopher, the ſcholar of

of THEOPHRASTUS, and the maſter of PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS. As little, and as ill as we are informed of the ſtate of natural philoſophy among the more antient naturaliſts of Greece, ſuch as PYTHAGORAS, ANAXAGORAS, DEMOCRITUS, and others, whoſe names are preſerved tho' their works are loſt, we know enough of PLATO and ARISTOTLE, whoſe works have been preſerved, perhaps more to the detriment than to the advancement of learning, to determine what the ſtate of it was in the days of STRATO. We know that it was no longer the ſtudy of nature by obſervation, and experiment; but that it conſiſted in a jargon of words, or at beſt in ſome vague hypothetical reaſonings: and yet STRATO, who could not have told the egyptian king how the idea of purple, the color of his robe, was produced, pretended to account for all the phænomena, and, among other doctrines, to eſtabliſh that of the plenum, for he laughed at the vacuum, as well as at the whole atomical ſyſtem of DEMOCRITUS.

HYPOTHESES are much in the favor of ſome philoſophers; for there have been many STRATOS even among the moderns. But hypotheſes may be employed without being abuſed. In all our attempts to account for the phænomena of nature there will be ſomething hypothetical neceſſarily included. The analytic method itſelf, our ſureſt road to ſcience, does not conduct us further than extreme probability, as it has been obſerved; and this probability muſt ſtand us in lieu of certainty.

tainty. But when we cannot arrive by this method at ſuch a probability, is it reaſonable to make an hypotheſis? Is it reaſonable, when we cannot draw from obſervation and experiment ſuch concluſions, as may be ſafe foundations on which to proceed by the ſynthetic method in the purſuit of truth, to aſſume certain principles, as if they were founded in the analytic method, which have been never proved, nor perhaps ſuggeſted by the phænomena, in hopes that they may be ſo afterwards? In a word, when the only clue we have fails us, which is moſt reaſonable, to ſtop ſhort, or to puſh forwards without any clue at all into the labyrinth of nature? I make no ſcruple of deciding in a caſe, ſo plain, that it would be a ſilly affectation of modeſty, not modeſty, to heſitate. When the phænomena do not point out to us any ſufficient reaſon why, and how a thing is as we diſcover it to be, nor the efficient cauſe of it, there is a ſufficient reaſon for ſtopping ſhort, and confeſſing our ignorance; but none for ſeeking, out of the phænomena, this reaſon, and this cauſe which we cannot find in them. This is learned ignorance, of which the greateſt philoſophers have no reaſon to be aſhamed. "Rationem—harum gravitatis "proprietatum ex phænomenis nondum potui "deducere, et hypotheſes non fingo," ſaid our Newton, after having advanced natural knowledge far beyond his cotemporaries, on the ſure foundations of experiment, and geometry. How preferable is this learned ignorance to that ignorant learning, of which ſo many others have fooliſhly

fooliſhed boaſted? DES CARTES, who mingled ſo much hypothetical with ſo much real knowledge, boaſted in a letter to his intimate friend the minime MERSENNE, "that he ſhould think "he knew nothing in natural philoſophy, if he "was only able to ſay how things may be, with-"out demonſtrating that they cannot be other-"wiſe." LEIBNITZ, who dealt in little elſe than hypotheſes, ſpeaking, in his reply to BAYLE's Reflections on his Pre-eſtabliſhed harmony, of the ridiculous whimſy of his monades, and the reſt of his metaphyſical traſh, compares himſelf to ANTAEUS; aſſerts that "every objection gives "him new ſtrength;" and boaſts vainly that he might ſay without vanity,

Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.

IT will be urged, perhaps, as deciſive in favor of hypotheſes, that they may be of ſervice, and can be of no diſſervice to us, in our purſuit of knowledge. An hypotheſis founded on mere arbitrary aſſumptions will be a true hypotheſis, and therefore of ſervice to philoſophy, if it is confirmed by many obſervations afterwards, and if no one phænomenon ſtand in oppoſition to it. An hypotheſis that appears inconſiſtent with the phænomena will be ſoon demonſtrated falſe, and as ſoon rejected. This reaſoning, which is the ſum of all that can be ſaid for them, will not hold good, I think, in either caſe, enough to countenance the abuſe of them which is made by the very perſons who urge this plea in favor of them.

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That ſuch an hypotheſis may be true, is within the bounds of poſſibility; becauſe it implies no contradiction to ſuppoſe that men, who paſs their lives in gueſſing, may gueſs ſometimes right. A man may throw ten ſixes with ten dice; but no man in his ſenſes would lay that he did, nor venture his ſtake on ſuch a chance. In the other caſe, it is true that an hypotheſis inconſiſtent with the phænomena may be ſoon demonſtrated falſe. But it is not true that it will be as ſoon rejected. If philoſophers are fond of making hypotheſes, their diſciples are as zealous to defend them. The honor of a whole ſect is thought to be engaged, and every individual is piqued that another ſhould ſhew that to be falſe, which he has all his life taken to be true; ſo that, notwithſtanding all the graces of novelty, a new truth will have much to do to diſlodge an old error. Inſtances of this ſort are innumerable. Let us produce one from aſtronomy itſelf.

If any hypotheſis was ever aſſumed with a plauſible probability, that which we call the ptolemaic was ſo. The apparent face of the heavens led men to it. We may ſay that the phænomena ſuggeſted it, and that the revolution of the ſun, planets, and ſtars, in ſeveral ſpheres round the earth, could ſcarce be doubted of by men who aſſumed any general concluſions, inſtead of drawing them all from a long courſe of particular obſervations carefully and learnedly made. The plauſibility of this falſe hypotheſis, and the authority

rity of the peripatetic ſchool, eſtabliſhed it on the ruins of the true ſyſtem which PYTHAGORAS had brought long before into Italy from the eaſt, and which was probably that of the egyptian, and chaldean aſtronomers. Falſe as it was, it maintained it's credit thirteen or fourteen centuries, if we reckon only from the time of the alexandrian aſtronomer PTOLEMY to that of COPERNICUS. Many difficulties had occurred, but as faſt as they did ſo new aſſumptions were made to reconcile them, till the whole became one complicated heap of hypotheſis upon hypotheſis. It was baniſhed at laſt, and a truer ſyſtem took it's place. The fautors of hypotheſes would have us believe that even the detection of their falſhood gives occaſion to our improvement in knowledge. But the road to truth does not lie through the precincts of error, and the improvement of aſtronomy was not owing to the deſtruction of the ptolemaic hypotheſis; but the deſtruction of this hypotheſis was owing to the improvement of aſtronomy. If this hypotheſis had never been made, COPERNICUS would not have had the honor of reviving the pythagorean ſyſtem, but mankind would have had the benefit of purſuing, without interruption, a ſyſtem founded on knowledge, inſtead of purſuing, during an interval of ſo many centuries, an hypotheſis founded on aſſumption.

To this antient let us join a modern inſtance, to ſuggeſt the ſame reflections, and confirm the ſame proofs. The ſyſtem of DES CARTES dazzled and

and impoſed at firſt. It was ſoon attacked however, but it has not been ſo ſoon defeated. No man, perhaps, was ever ſo fit, as this philoſopher, to make, and maintain an hypotheſis; to aſſume, and to improve and defend his aſſumptions. The notion he entertained, and propagated, that there is, beſides clear ideas, a kind of inward ſentiment of evidence, which may be a principle of knowledge, is, I ſuppoſe, dangerous in phyſical enquiries as well as in abſtract reaſoning. He who departs from the analytic method, to eſtabliſh general propoſitions concerning the phænomena on aſſumptions, and who reaſons from theſe aſſumptions, afterwards, on inward ſentiments of evidence, as they are called, inſtead of clear and real ideas, lays aſide at once the only ſure guides to knowledge. No wonder then if he wanders from it. This DES CARTES did very widely in his conſtruction of a world: and yet by dint of genius he gave a great air of ſimplicity and plauſibility to his hypotheſis; and he knew how to make even geometry ſubſervient to error. It proved in other hands, indeed, the inſtrument of detecting his errors, and of eſtabliſhing truer principles of natural philoſophy. He furniſhed to others arms againſt himſelf, among the reſt to our NEWTON; for tho' the ſyſtem of the latter be no more owing to the hypotheſis of the former, than that of COPERNICUS to that of PTOLEMY, yet was it the application of geometry to phyſics, that enabled the britiſh philoſopher to make ſo many admirable diſcoveries: and the introduction of geometry

geometry into phyſics muſt be acknowledged due to the french philoſopher. To conclude, by bringing this example to our purpoſe. The plenum of DES CARTES is well nigh deſtroyed; many of his laws of motion are ſhewn to be falſe; the mills that ſerved to grind his three elements are demoliſhed: and his fluid matter, in which, as in a torrent, the planets were carried round the ſun, whilſt a ſimilar motion in the particular vortex of every planet impelled all bodies to the center, is vaniſhed. Notwithſtanding all this; how ſlowly, how unwillingly have many philoſophers departed from the carteſian hypotheſis? They have had recourſe to the moſt forced ſuppoſitions to defend it; and when it has been demonſtrated falſe in one of the principal parts, in that of his fluid matter, whoſe rapid circulation he ſuppoſes to cauſe the fall of bodies, and the motion of the planets, and which he invented to explain theſe phaenomena, we ſhall be told very gravely, that ſome fluid matter or other may, however, in ſome manner or other, be the cauſe of theſe phaenomena. It is even ridiculous to obſerve the ſame men tenacious of an hypotheſis neither deduced from the phaenomena, nor conſiſtent with them, and averſe to receive, or at beſt extremely ſcrupulous about receiving, a ſyſtem built on obſervation and experiment, not on aſſumption, and which all the phaenomena conſpire to eſtabliſh.

IF philoſophers meaned nothing more than the diſcovery of truth, they would confine themſelves

to thoſe rules, by which alone, and to thoſe bounds of enquiry, within which alone, we are able to diſcover it. But a predominant principle of vanity makes them break theſe rules, and paſs theſe bounds. Not content with philoſophical liberty, they affect to proceed licentiouſly: and it is this affectation that makes them ſo fond of hypotheſes, by the means of which, how imperfect ſoever their knowledge is, their pretended ſyſtems are ſtill complete. Thus it has happened that natural philoſophers have filled their works with fictions, and, like lying travellers, have given deſcriptions of countries through which they never paſſed. They have done even more, they have affected to reveal the ſecrets of courts they never ſaw. This I mean; they have not only ſuppoſed exiſtences that never exiſted, but have preſumed themſelves able to give a ſufficient reaſon for every thing that does exiſt. LEIBNITZ, who had much knowledge and ſome ſagacity, but too much pretended ſubtilty and real preſumption, impoſed this obligation on philoſophers, the obligation of adulterating phyſics with metaphyſics. Thus, for inſtance, he thought himſelf obliged to give a ſufficient reaſon how, and why the extenſion of body, or body according to the Carteſians, becomes poſſible; for tho' actuality may, he denied that poſſibility could proceed from the will of God. He found this reaſon neither in ſenſible extenſion, nor in the inſenſible atoms that compoſe body. But he found it happily in his monades, that is,

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in ſimple, unextended beings, that are the only ſubſtances, and that compoſe all extenſion, which God could not have created if he had not created them firſt. Is it worth while to acquire the name of a great philoſopher at the expence of amuſing mankind with ſuch hypothetical extravagancies? Surely not.

SINCE I have ventured to cenſure DES CARTES on this head, on which he was very liable to cenſure, I think myſelf obliged to juſtify him on another, on which he has been accuſed very unjuſtly. STRATO might be an atheiſt, for what I know, tho' mention is made, in the catalogue of his works preſerved by DIOGENES LAERTIUS, of three books that he wrote concerning the gods. But the paſſage in the Academics of TULLY, where it is ſaid, that he did not employ the gods in making the world, "negat opera deorum ſe uti ad "fabricandum mundum," will not perſuade me that he was ſo. Nothing can be more conſiſtent than to acknowledge a Supreme Being, the ſource of all exiſtence, the firſt efficient cauſe of all things, and to account for the phænomena by phyſical and mechanical cauſes, by matter and motion. This DES CARTES therefore endeavoured, and might endeavour to do without forfeiting the character of a good theiſt. Philoſophers might very reaſonably object to his hypotheſis; but divines had the leſs reaſon to do ſo, becauſe, beſides proving the exiſtence of the ſelf-exiſtent Being by an argument which he thought good, and which has been urged as deciſive by MAL-

BRANCHE and others, the very foundation of his doctrine rests on these principles, that God created matter, and that he impressed two motions on the parts of it. But my lord BACON, a much better apologist than I am, had obviated the objection made to DES CARTES long before this philosopher had writ, in the third book of the Augmentation of Science: and the passage is so considerable, that I will dwell, with your leave, a little upon it.

THIS great author, then, was so desirous to keep metaphysicians in countenance, by keeping metaphysics in the rank of sciences, that he resolved at any rate to give them an object. As such he assigned the doctrine of formal causes: and indeed, if he had admitted the forms of PLATO, forms entirely abstracted from matter, these would have been imaginary objects, in his scheme, of some science more sublime than physics. But these he rejects deservedly, as theological speculations that infected and corrupted the whole of PLATO's natural philosophy: so that he left himself no forms to establish as objects of metaphysics, but such as must be discovered, if they are to be discovered, by physics; which he himself admits in effect, when he says, that we may discover them if we turn our eyes to action and use; that is, to the action and use of substances, whose forms are the species of things; and which he confirms, I think, by the examples he brings to explain this inexplicable doctrine, or rather unattainable science. In default of this, that the learned

learned chancellor might provide ſome object for metaphyſics, he eſtabliſhed the inquiſition, or reſearch of final cauſes, as a ſecond. He ſhould not be much concerned, he ſays, if the order of this reſearch, that he would place among metaphyſics, and that has been placed uſually among phyſics, were alone concerned. Now here I venture with fear and trembling, but I muſt venture, for the love of truth puſhes me on, to differ from this great man. The order, according to which the doctrine of final cauſes is confined to the known phyſical province, inſtead of being tranſlated to a metaphyſical region, appears to me not only uſeful, but neceſſary to be preſerved, as well to advance real knowledge, as to prevent error, both philoſophical and theological. The more we proceed in the ſtudy of nature, under the conduct of experimental philoſophy, the more diſcoveries we make and ſhall make of the infinite wiſdom, as well as power, of it's author. The ſtructure of the parts, the deſign and harmony of the whole, will be matter of perpetual aſtoniſhment, and ought to be a motive to the moſt devout adoration of that ſupreme, and incomprehenſible Being, of God, the maker and the preſerver of the univerſe. I ſaid the harmony and deſign, as well as the ſtructure; for, beſides the admirable contrivance which appears in the bare ſtructure of all the bodies, animal bodies eſpecially, that ſurround us, as well as of our own, when we contemplate them without any regard to their deſtination, wants, or uſes; there ap-

pears ſomething ſtill more admirable when we contemplate them in theſe reſpects. Sometimes we can diſcover neither efficient, nor final cauſe; ſometimes, but more rarely, both. Sometimes we diſcover the former, and the latter eſcapes our enquiry. Sometimes again the final cauſe is more obvious than the efficient, as in one of the inſtances brought by my lord BACON; for ſurely this final cauſe, that eye-laſhes were given to ſhadow and defend the eye, is much more evident than the efficient cauſe he aſſigns, or any other, perhaps, that can be aſſigned. But in all caſes where ſuch diſcoveries are made really, they are made by phyſical reſearches. When we proceed in the inveſtigation of them by the help of experimental philoſophy, we put ourſelves under the conduct of God, who leads us, by the knowledge of his works, to the knowledge of himſelf. But when we abandon this method, and pretend by the ſtrength of our intellect to arrive at ſuperior ſcience, we put ourſelves under the conduct of imagination, the worſt guide a philoſopher can chooſe, and never ſo ſeducing, nor ſo dangerous, as in the brighteſt genius. This remark is abundantly confirmed in general by the experience of all ages*.

* IT comes into my thoughts to mention, upon this occaſion, another opinion, which caſts a ridicule on all religion. If we are able to collect any truth from our obſervations on the mundane ſyſtem, beſides that of a ſelf-exiſtent and intelligent firſt cauſe of all things, it is that of final cauſes. The certainty we have of theſe makes part of the demonſtration of

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For theſe reaſons, which might be greatly extended and inforced, I cannot ſubſcribe to the

the other, and is the ſublimeſt and moſt important ſpeculation in which natural philoſophy can terminate. I ſay terminate, becauſe the abſurdity of thoſe philoſophers, who, in the courſe of their enquiries, aſſigned final inſtead of phyſical cauſes, has been already expoſed. The abuſe, which thoſe who profeſs theology in all religions, make of final cauſes, is of another kind, and may ſerve as a further example of the fantaſtical and profane notions, which men aſſume hypothetically when they carry their reaſonings about ſpirit and ſpiritual things, without regard to what experience might teach them, up to the divine nature and oeconomy.

Mankind, in general, eſteem their ſpecies to be the final cauſe of the whole creation; and each ſociety or ſect of men is inſtructed to eſteem itſelf a principal, if not the ſole, object of providence. On this foundation even they, who never obſerved, perhaps, any of the numberleſs and aſtoniſhing inſtances of order, contrivance, and deſign, which are obvious in the conſtitution of things, aſcribe, and inſtruct others to aſcribe, every event, that is produced in the ordinary courſe of nature, to extraordinary interpoſitions of God's immediate and particular providence, juſt as they may be ſtrained to ſuit prejudice, intereſt, vanity, and paſſion. I need not bring examples in proof: they will occur to you faſt enough, to ſhew how a doctrine, that ſhould increaſe our admiration of God's infinite wiſdom and power, and enliven all the acts of adoration that we direct to this incomprehenſible Being, plunges men, by the abuſe they make, and a wrong application of it, into error and ſuperſtition. It is error proportioned to the comprehenſion of every mind, and to the vanity of every heart. It prevails, therefore, eaſily, and ſpreads from the higheſt down to the loweſt ranks of men. If the ridiculous queſtion, which Seneca puts in his book concerning providence, "nunquid hoc "quoque a Deo aliquis exigit, ut bonorum virorum etiam ſar-"cinas, ſervat?" had been put to your pariſh clerk, he would have anſwered, I doubt not, with much holy aſſurance, in the affirmative, and would have inſerted, among his anecdotes,

partition of ſcience which our famous chancellor makes on this occaſion. They, who have no pretenſions to be eſteemed natural philoſophers, profit in their ſeveral profeſſions of the diſcoveries which theſe philoſophers make about efficient cauſes. Juſt ſo divines, or they who call themſelves metaphyſicians, may profit of thoſe which the ſame philoſophers make about final cauſes: and when they do ſo, in ſuch a manner as to create and maintain in the minds of men a due awe and reverence of the Supreme Being, theſe diſcoveries will be productive of the beſt, and nobleſt effects; far from being barren, like virgins conſecrated to

ſome ſpecial examples of wallets and bundles providentially ſaved, or recovered. The Stoics are ridiculed, in TULLY's Academical Queſtions, for having low notions of the divinity, and ſuch as ſuppoſed among the gods a worker like MYRMECIDES, who was famous in his time, as well as one CALLICRATES, for making bees, and flies, and ants, and other ſmall inſects in ivory. The joke was unjuſtly applied, as far as it was applied to this general poſition, that nothing could be without God, "cujus quidem vos majeſtatem deducitis," ſays the academician, "uſque ad apium, formicarumque perfectio-"nem: ut etiam inter deos MYRMECIDES aliquis minutorum "opuſculorum fabricator fuiſſe videatur." This joke on the Stoics was unphiloſophical and ſilly. But what advantage would this academician have taken over them, if he could have laid to their charge, not only that they made God the immediate author of the leaſt, as well as of the greateſt productions in nature, but that they made him the efficient cauſe of every immoral ſentiment and action? He would have had then a large field, indeed, wherein to exult, "in quo "poſſit exultare oratio." But the Stoics, as abſurd and as ſuperſtitious as many of their opinions were, gave him no ſuch advantage. He muſt have waited till our age, to have had ſuch a monſtrous opinion as this to combat among the profeſſors of theiſm.

God,

God, as the chancellor expreſſes himſelf, rather prettily than truly. "Cauſarum finalium inqui-"ſitio ſterilis eſt, et, tanquam virgo Deo conſe-"crata, nil parit." But ſtill there will be as little reaſon to advance that the inveſtigation of final cauſes is a part of metaphyſics, or of theology, as there is to ſay that the inveſtigation of efficient cauſes is the object of every profeſſion wherein ſome knowledge concerning them is employed.

Now, tho' I cannot ſubſcribe to this partition of ſcience, nor think the order, in which the reſearch of final cauſes is placed, at all indifferent, yet I ſubſcribe moſt readily to all that is ſaid, in the ſame place, againſt thoſe who ſubſtitute final in lieu of efficient cauſes. Both are objects, but diſtinct objects of phyſics; and nothing can tempt men to confound them but a ſort of lazineſs and vanity. By one, they are led to decline ſome trouble, and by the other, to hope to conceal their ignorance. We ſhall not be at all uncharitable in aſſigning ſuch motives to the two philoſophers who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by this proceeding; in which they have been followed, as in other abſurdities, by numbers. PLATO had a luxuriant imagination, and a great flow of words. It coſt him, therefore, much leſs to invent final cauſes, and to expatiate theologically upon them, than it would have done to purſue the diſcovery of efficient cauſes by the ſlow and painful courſe of experiments. ARISTOTLE had great ſubtilty of genius; and the ſame ambition that

made him think, like an Ottoman prince, to use my lord BACON's simile, that he could not reign securely unless he put all his brethren to death, made him think too, that he ought at any rate to maintain his pretensions to universal knowledge. For this purpose he perplexed what he could not explain, and in the instance before us, he discoursed logically about final causes, to conceal his ignorance of the efficient. I should be unwilling to warrant any fact on the authority of JUSTIN MARTYR, on whom the idlest tales were able to impose; but the bare report that ran in Greece concerning the death of this philosopher, who was said to have drowned himself in the Negropontic current, for shame that he had not discovered the cause of it, may serve to shew, that the character he has at this day, is that which he had in his own age and country. Upon the whole, it may very well be, that DEMOCRITUS and others, whether atheists, or theists, who gave, or seemed to give no place to God, nor intelligence, in the production of the phænomena, nor made any mention, by consequence, of final causes, but applied themselves wholly to the discovery of material efficient causes, might penetrate, for that very reason, deeper into natural philosophy, than they could have done if they had recurred often to the wisdom and power of God, like PLATO; to those of nature, like ARISTOTLE; and to final causes, like both. This might be; and my lord BACON, who thinks so, and who approved this method of pursuing the study of physics, prepared, therefore, an apology

apology for DES CARTES long before this philoſopher wanted it.

THERE is a paſſage in PLATO, which I ſhall have occaſion to quote in another place, and to another purpoſe, where SOCRATES, after reading a treatiſe of natural philoſophy which ANAXAGORAS had writ, ſneers at him, and complains that he, who aſcribed the ſtructure of the univerſe to a ſupreme mind, labored ſo much in the explanation of material, inſtead of diſcourſing about final cauſes. This paſſage would prove beyond diſpute, if any proof was wanting, that PLATO introduced, or ſupported at leaſt by the authority of SOCRATES, the abſurd cuſtom of ſubſtituting final intentional cauſes in the place of mechanical and material; and that philoſophers, who were as good theiſts as himſelf, tho' they did not affect ſo much theology, purſued the ſtudy of nature in the ſame method as the materialiſts, tho' they aſſerted an intelligent firſt cauſes, which the others denied.

THE truth is, that neither theſe philoſophers, nor even the others, could proceed in the inveſtigation of material cauſes, without diſcovering ſometimes the intentional, final cauſes of things; becauſe the latter are often, tho' not always, ſo plainly pointed out by the former, that he who does not ſee them, muſt ſhut his eyes on purpoſe. When they are not thus plainly pointed out, it is vain preſumption to pretend to account for them; and SOCRATES would have had no reaſon

reaſon to complain, if a naturaliſt, a ſtranger to Athens, looking at him in his priſon, and ſeeing him fettered and chained, had ſhewn how it came to paſs that he could not walk, and that he could ſit, without preſuming to determine why he was there.

To conclude, and wind up this ſection; there is no ſtudy, after that of morality, which deſerves the application of the human mind ſo much as that of natural philoſophy, and of the arts and ſciences which ſerve to promote it. The will of God, in the conſtitution of our moral ſyſtem, is the object of one; his infinite wiſdom and power, that are manifeſted in the natural ſyſtem of the univerſe, are the object of the other. One is the immediate concern of every man, and lies therefore within the reach of every man. The other does ſo too, as far as our immediate wants require, and far enough to excite awe and veneration of a Supreme Being in every attentive mind. But farther than this, a knowledge of phyſical nature is not the immediate and neceſſary concern of every man; and therefore a further enquiry into it becomes the labor of a few, tho' the fruits of this enquiry be to the advantage of many. Diſcoveries of uſe in human life have been ſometimes made; but theſe fruits in general conſiſt chiefly in the gratification of curioſity. Their acquiſition, therefore, is painful: and when all that can be gathered are gathered, the crop will be ſmall. Should the human ſpecies exiſt a thouſand

ſand generations more, and the ſtudy of nature be carried on through all of them with the ſame application, a little more particular knowledge of the apparent properties of matter, and of the ſenſible principles and laws of motion might be acquired; more phænomena might be diſcovered, and a few more of thoſe links, perhaps, which compoſe the great immeaſurable chain of cauſes and effects that deſcends from the throne of God. But human ſenſe, which can alone furniſh the materials of this knowledge, continuing the ſame, the want of ideas, the want of adequate ideas, would make it to the laſt impracticable to penetrate into the great ſecrets of nature, the real eſſences of ſubſtances, and the primary cauſes of their action, their paſſion, and all their operations; ſo that mankind would ceaſe to be, without having acquired a complete and real knowledge of the world they inhabited, and of the bodies they wore in it.

SECT. IV.

HAVING now ſaid all that occurs to me at preſent concerning our complex ideas of ſubſtances, whoſe architypes are without us, I proceed to take ſome further notice, than has been yet taken by me, of our other complex ideas and notions, which are ſaid to have their architypes within us, and which may be ſaid, I think, more properly, in the ſame ſenſe, to be architypes themſelves. Nor is this the ſole difference by which they

they are diſtinguiſhed from the former. Thoſe of ſubſtances are received by the mind in it's paſſive, theſe are framed by the mind in it's active ſtate. They are framed by the mind as the mind has need of them, and therefore on no ſubjects ſo much as on thoſe that regard the thoughts, the opinions, the affections, the paſſions, and the actions of mankind. The architypes of our ideas of ſubſtances exiſt whether our minds perceive them or not. Theſe being architypes themſelves, and having no exiſtence out of the mind, have no permanent exiſtence any where, not even in the mind; for there they exiſt no longer than whilſt they are the immediate objects of thought. They ceaſe to exiſt, when they ceaſe to be perceived. But the mind, having once made them, can recal them into being, and employ them to facilitate the acquiſition and communication of knowledge. It is true indeed, and it has been obſerved already, that nature ſeems to obtrude, or obtrudes even the complex ideas of modes and relations upon us, as well as thoſe of ſubſtances. But ſtill there is a plain difference between the two caſes, which muſt be a little more and more preciſely developed, than it has been in the ſecond ſection. Both are leſſons, but different leſſons of nature. Senſe alone is immediately concerned in one, whether we receive by it the firſt impreſſions of outward objects, or whether we correct, and determine the ideas theſe impreſſions have given us. But intellect is immediately and principally concerned in the other. Intellect ſerves in the uſe and application of ideas acquired

acquired by ſenſe, but has no ſhare in framing them. Intellect, on the other hand, has always an immediate, and principal ſhare, and is ſometimes alone employed, in framing our complex ideas and notions of modes and relations. Thus, for inſtance, to mention a ſimple as well as a mixed mode; when we obſerve certain terminations of finite extenſion, or certain proceedings of men to men, the leſſon of nature does not conſiſt in this, that theſe are patterns by which, and according to which, the ideas or notions we ſpeak of are framed, without any ſhare taken by the mind except that of perception; but it conſiſts rather in giving hints, if I may ſay ſo, which are vague, and neither determined nor claſſed like our ideas of ſubſtances; and the mind, taking theſe hints, frames, by the exerciſe of it's diſcerning, compounding, and comparing faculties, theſe ideas or notions. The terminations of extenſion, that are ſeen by us, produce ideas no doubt; but I chooſe on this occaſion to deſign them as hints, becauſe they do not ſo much give, as ſuggeſt the ideas which the mind frames by conſidering theſe terminations of the extreme parts of extenſion, both diſtinctly and relatively. Confuſed appearances of this ſort ſtrike the ſenſes, but the ideas of particular figures, as well as the general notion of figure, may be framed independently of theſe ſenſations by the mind. In like manner, an action which we ſee performed, as in the caſe of killing, mentioned above, gives an idea, no doubt; but this idea, in the reſpect in which it is conſidered here,

here, is nothing more than an hint to the mind, that paſſes from a bare perception of the action to contemplate all the circumſtances of it, and all the relations both of the action, and of the actors, and ſo frames by reflection, without the concurrence of ſenſation, ideas and notions of another kind, both particular and general. This is the great intellectual province, wherein our minds range with much freedom, and often with exorbitant licence, in the purſuit of real, or imaginary ſcience. We add ideas to ideas, and notions to notions; and by conſidering the habitudes and relations of all theſe, we acquire at length ſuch a multitude, as aſtoniſhes the mind itſelf, and is both for number and variety inconceivable.

When we take ſuch a general view of human knowledge, and repreſent to ourſelves all the objects that our minds purſue, and in the purſuit whereof we pretend not only to reaſon on leſs or greater grounds of probability, but moſt commonly to demonſtrate, we are apt to entertain an high opinion, and to make extravagant encomiums of our intellect. But when we enter into a ſerious and impartial detail concerning this knowledge, and analyſe carefully what the great pretenders to it have given and give us daily for knowledge, we ſhall be obliged to confeſs that the human intellect is rather a rank, than a fertile, ſoil, barren without due culture, and apt to ſhoot up tares and weeds with too much. By ſuch combinations of ideas, as I have been mentioning,

we

we ſhorten and facilitate the operations of our minds, as well as the communication of our thoughts. Our knowledge becomes general, and our intellect ſeems to be leſs dependent on ſenſe. From which obſervations, philoſophers have entertained falſe notions of what they call pure intellect, and have flattered themſelves that they could extend their knowledge, by the power the mind exerciſes in framing complex ideas and notions, very far beyond the narrow bounds to which it is limited by ſimple ideas, over which the mind has not the leaſt original power, and which muſt therefore, let the mind compoſe, combine, and abſtract them as it pleaſes (for it cannot make any) determine the extent of our complex ideas and notions.

But, beſides the limitations impoſed on the mind by the human conſtitution, there is another which we ourſelves muſt impoſe on it, if we deſire to combine our ideas and our notions ſo, as to obtain by their means real and uſeful knowledge. It is the more neceſſary to inſiſt on this limitation, becauſe philoſophers have not only neglected it too much in practice, but endeavoured to eſtabliſh opinions inconſiſtent with it. Obſerve the chain of theſe opinions. The human mind is a participation of the divine mind, or an emanation from it, or ſomething very analogous to it. The eſſences of things do not depend on God; for if they did, things might be poſſible and impoſſible at the ſame time according to his will; which im-

plies contradiction. The divine intelligence is the ſcene of all things poſſible: but, tho' the divine will be the ſource of actuality, it is not ſo of poſſibility. Poſſibility and impoſſibility are fixed natures, independent on God. The knowledge of things poſſible, independently of their exiſtence, is abſolute knowledge. The knowledge of things actual, in conſequence of their exiſtence, is relative knowledge. The human mind is capable of both. Philoſophers may, therefore, contemplate the intelligible natures, the fixed and unalterable eſſences of things, whether the will of God determines them to actual exiſtence or not. Philoſophers may reaſon therefore not only from their own ſyſtem, that of actuality; but from God's, that of poſſibility. Theſe opinions, ſome of which are nearly true, others of which are abſolutely falſe, and all of which are liable to much abuſe, have been advanced: and theſe, and others of the ſame kind, are the neceſſary foundations of the moſt ſublime metaphyſics. Let us deſcend from ſuch imaginary heights; place ourſelves on the human level, and conſider from thence what this part of human knowledge is, concerning which we are now to ſpeak, and from whence, and how it ariſes.

It has been obſerved, in ſpeaking of that part of natural philoſophy which contemplates ſubſtances, that we muſt never loſe ſight of experience, if we aim at acquiring real knowledge.

But

But we may go further on as good grounds, and affirm that the ſame rule muſt be followed in that other part of natural philoſophy, for ſuch it is if it be any thing, which contemplates mind; and in all our general, or abſtract reaſonings about moral, or other matters. I am far from ſaying that we ſhould not reaſon about things poſſible, as well as things actual, or that we ſhould exclude every thing hypothetical out of our reaſonings. I know too well that probability is our lot oftener than certainty. But this I ſay, that we ſhould never reaſon about the firſt, except under the direction of the laſt, and much leſs in contradiction to the laſt. God's knowledge precedes all exiſtence. All exiſtence proceeds from his knowledge and his will. He made things actual becauſe he knew them, and why ſhould I not ſay becauſe he made them, poſſible? But we poor creatures ſhould not be able to gueſs at things poſſible, if we did not take our riſe from things actual. Human knowledge is ſo entirely and ſolely derived from actual Being, that without actual Being we ſhould not have even one of thoſe ſimple ideas, whereof all the complex ideas and abſtract notions that turn our heads are compoſed. Theſe complex ideas and abſtract notions, to be materials of general and real knowledge, muſt have a conformity with exiſtence. They muſt be true, not in an idle metaphyſical ſenſe, that they are really what they are; but in this ſenſe, that they are true repreſentations of actual, or of ſuch poſſible

exiſtence, as experience leaves us no room to doubt may become actual.

That this is agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind undebauched with philoſophy or ſuperſtition, the univerſal practice of mankind may ſerve to convince us. The human mind is able to frame many complex ideas and abſtract notions, to which no names have been aſſigned in any language, becauſe they have not been brought into uſe among any people. Many other complex ideas and abſtract notions have names aſſigned to them in one language, and are in uſe among one people, and have no ſuch names, nor are in any ſuch uſe among another. What ſhall we ſay is the reaſon of ſuch obvious matters of fact? The reaſon appears to me to be plainly this. Men are determined to frame theſe complex ideas, and abſtract notions, by the want they have of them: and the want they have of them ariſes from hence, that they obſerve certain combinations of beings, of actions, of modes, and relations to exiſt, relatively to which they could neither think, diſcourſe, nor act, all which it is often either their inclination, their intereſt, or their duty to do, unleſs they applied their minds to the framing of ſuch ideas and notions. Men form, therefore, no where, complex ideas and notions of combinations of this kind, which they have obſerved to exiſt no where, as in the firſt caſe. Nor do they form them always where ſuch combinations do exiſt; tho' they are not enough obſerved to have

have the want of theſe ideas and notions perceived, as in the ſecond caſe. Theſe ideas and notions are ſo neceſſary to the improvement of knowledge, that as we proceed in acquiring and communicating it by the employment of ſome, ſo the knowledge we acquire makes it neceſſary in every ſtep we advance, to frame and to employ more, that we may proceed further.

It is reaſonable to believe that the firſt of men had framed no ideas, or notions of jealouſy, envy, anger, malice, treachery, and murder, in paradiſe, nor perhaps out of it, before CAIN ſlew ABEL. Then, no doubt, he framed all theſe, and thoſe of aſſaſſination and fratricide beſides, and invented words to ſignify them, as he had invented names for all the beaſts of the field, and fowls of the air, when they paſſed in review before him. Since the days of ADAM, and his unhappy fall, as the number, and the iniquity of his poſterity increaſed, ſo has their experience: and therefore legiſlators, and the founders of commonwealths, and all thoſe who have civilized and inſtructed mankind, have been careful to obſerve the behaviour, and the dealings of men with one another in the ſame, and in different ſocieties. They have remarked the circumſtances, and the conſequences of every action relatively to the happineſs and unhappineſs of mankind. Thoſe of one ſort have been termed virtues, thoſe of the other, vices: and as theſe virtues and vices have ariſen, and have offered themſelves to obſervation, the

ſame perſons, political and moral philoſophers, have proceeded in determining complex ideas or notions of them, and in marking the ſeveral combinations by diſtinct names, in order to promote the practice of virtue, and to reſtrain vice, by improving the natural ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments.

THUS then the principles of the law of nature, and of civil juriſprudence have been collected à poſteriori, by experience and obſervation: and the ſame method ſhould be taken in every part of philoſophy, tho' I have inſiſted particularly on this alone. We ſhould not ſuffer, much leſs encourage, imagination to rove in the ſearch of truth. To know things as they are, is to know truth. To know them as they may be, is to gueſs at truth. Judgment and obſervation guide to one, imagination and ſpeculation to the other. To know them as they are, the mind muſt be conſtantly intent to frame it's ideas and notions after that great original, nature; for tho' theſe ideas and notions are properly and uſefully framed by the mind, that they may ſerve as architypes by which we reaſon, and according to which we judge, yet muſt all the parts of them be taken from nature, and no otherwiſe put together than nature warrants. As well may the painter copy the features of a face on which he never looks, by pure gueſs, as the philoſopher frame his ideas and notions of nature, phyſical and moral, by pure intellect. One may draw a metaphyſical

man,

man; and the other invent a metaphyſical hypotheſis. But the features of the picture, and the ideas and notions of the ſyſtem being taken from imaginary, not real exiſtence, the picture will be the picture of no body, and the ſyſtem the ſyſtem of nothing. Nay, there is ſtill a worſe conſequence that follows often, becauſe it is almoſt unavoidable. Imagination ſubmitted to judgment will never go beyond knowledge founded on experience, or high probability immediately deducible from it. But when imaginations naturally warm, and excited by a ſtrong deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, break looſe from this control, tho' the poſſible man, and the poſſible ſyſtem may be ſo compoſed as to contain nothing abſolutely impoſſible, yet they may contain ſomething monſtrous, like thoſe productions wherein nature deviates from her regular courſe. Whenever this happens, and it has often happened in philoſophy, it muſt not be deemed a jot leſs abſurd, to take theſe ideas and notions for real architypes, or the ſyſtem they compoſe for a ſyſtem of real knowledge, than it would be to take ſuch monſtrous productions for the architypes of any ſpecies.

This proceeding is the more dangerous, becauſe we may accuſtom our minds to contemplate chimeras till they grow familiar to us, and paſs for realities. After which we ſhall not fail to reaſon from them, and to control even what is, by what imagination has told us may be. The

very reverſe ſhould be our practice. All that we imagine may be, ſhould be compared over and over with the things that are: and till ſuch a compariſon and analyſe has been well and ſufficiently made, all argumentation is impertinent. We can frame ideas of a centaur, or an hippogryph. No contradiction is implied by ranking them among poſſible beings. We can ſhew wherein theſe complex ideas agree and diſagree. We can reaſon, frame propoſitions, affirm, and deny concerning them: but yet every man who is not out of his ſenſes will confeſs, I ſuppoſe, that theſe ideas are phantaſtical, and that it is therefore abſurd to reaſon about them. They are phantaſtical, becauſe their ſuppoſed architypes do not exiſt. The reaſoning about them is abſurd, becauſe it is abſurd to reaſon about ſubſtances that are not actual, tho' they may be poſſible.

But I aſk, is it a jot leſs abſurd to frame ideas, and notions, of mixed modes and relations any otherwiſe, than experience ſhews us that nature warrants to do. Mr. Locke has obſerved truly, that "mixed modes are made for the moſt "part out of the ſimple ideas of thinking, and "motion, wherein all action is comprehended; "and out of that of power, from whence we "conceive all action to proceed." Now if this be ſo, is it not evident that mixed modes, how much ſoever mixed, are reſolvable, and ſhould be analyſed into ideas leſs complex, and theſe ultimately into ſimple ideas? Is it not evident,

that whether we conſider intellectual, or corporeal agency, whether we frame mixed modes of powers as modifications of thought and motion, or whether we conſider them only, for want of being able to do more, in the actions they produce; is it not evident that we muſt have recourſe on all theſe occaſions to exiſtence, exiſtence of powers, and actions, or of actions at leaſt?

THE example of power and action, which I employ in ſpeaking of mixed modes, is equally applicable to the caſe of relations, among which that of cauſe and effect is one of the moſt conſiderable, as it is the relation, concerning which the mind of man is the moſt curious to acquire knowledge. All our ideas of relation are framed by the compariſon the mind makes of one idea with another: as theſe ideas therefore are phantaſtical, or real, ſo our ideas of their relations, how juſtly ſoever the mind makes the compariſon, are in effect phantaſtical, or real too. The compariſon therefore muſt be not only that of ideas with ideas, but that of ideas with the objects of them, with things. This recourſe to exiſtence is ſo truly the only ſure rule, by which we can frame our ideas in ſuch a manner as to make them proper materials of real human knowledge at leaſt, that it is, I ſuppoſe, a miſtake moſt commonly, when we are thought to frame phantaſtical ideas of relations by a wrong compariſon of real ideas. I ſuppoſe we ſhall find on ſuch occaſions, if we obſerve cloſely, that the phan-

taſtical idea of relation does not ariſe ſo much from a wrong compariſon of real ideas which the mind contemplates, as from a voluntary or involuntary corruption of the reality of theſe ſuppoſed real ideas.

I SAY voluntary, or involuntary, becauſe philoſophers are apt to make complex ideas and notions of all kinds, not only wantonly but unfairly. Theſe ideas and notions ſhould be compoſed in order to aſſiſt the mind in forming opinions, or acquiring knowledge. But it is obvious to obſervation, that men begin very often by forming ſtrange opinions, or by taking them on truſt; and afterwards put together inconſiſtent, and inadequate ideas, which they ſuppoſe to be both conſiſtent, and adequate, in order to frame ſuch ideas of mixed modes and relations, as may help them to impoſe, or defend their opinions with ſome appearance of plauſibility. The mind wanders eaſily; and is eaſily, more eaſily lead into error about modes and relations, than about ſubſtances; and error about the former may be concealed better, and defended more plauſibly, by metaphyſical chicane, than about the latter. Let us keep our minds, therefore, conſtantly intent on thoſe criterions which our phyſical and moral ſyſtems hold out to us: and if by ſurpriſe, inadvertency, or prepoſſeſſion, we have been led too far from them, let us return to them as to the oracles of truth. For want of doing one or the other, into what extravagant opinions, under

under the ſpecious names of metaphyſical, or theological ſcience, have not men been carried? You give us philoſophy in a poetical dreſs. You adorn, but do not diſguiſe, and much leſs corrupt the truth. There are who have given us mere poetry in a philoſophical dreſs: and, I think, you muſt admit that PLATO, MALBRANCHE, and a good friend of ours, to inſtance in none of inferior note, are as truly poets, as HOMER and you. In a word, the boaſted power of framing complex ideas, and abſtract notions, will be found, as it is exerciſed, to be ſo far from ſhewing the great force and extent of human intellect, and from raiſing man up to divinity, that it will ſhew, on the contrary, how weak and how confined this intellect is, and ſink him down, if you will allow me ſuch an expreſſion, into that animality above which he affects ſo vainly to riſe.

THIS now, whereof we have taken ſome view in ſeveral of it's branches, is that noble fund of ideas from whence all our intellectual riches are derived. The mind of man does often what princes and ſtates have done. It gives a currency to braſs and copper, coined in the ſeveral philoſophical and theological mints, and raiſes the value of gold and ſilver above that of their true ſtandard. But the ſucceſs of this expedient is much alike in both caſes. In different ſects, as in different ſtates, the impoſition paſſes; but none are the richer for it.

ONE

One great advantage that has been reaped ſince the reſurrection of letters, and ſince the improvements of modern philoſophy in the ſtudy of nature intellectual and corporeal, has been this, that men have diſcerned their ignorance better than they did in the days of ignorance, and that they have diſcovered more and more of it, as they have advanced in knowledge. A great part of this diſcovery is that of the limitation, as well as imperfection, of our ſimple and complex ideas and notions. Limited and imperfect they are, no doubt; and yet it would be well for us if they had no other defect. Another, and, on many occaſions, a greater, belongs to them; for, even in the narrow compaſs to which they extend, they are apt to fluctuate and vary: ſo that, beſides the difficulty of determining them well, there is that of preſerving the determination of them ſteadily in our minds. He who is attentive to do ſo, muſt acknowledge the difficulty he finds of this ſort, even in his private meditations. But the difficulty increaſes vaſtly when he is to communicate theſe ideas and notions in diſcourſe or writing, and above all if he is obliged to enter the liſts of diſputation.

Our complex ideas being aſſemblages of ſimple ideas, that have often no other connection except that which the mind gives them, we might be eaſily led to conceive the difficulty of this taſk by a bare reflection on the weakneſs of memory, and, if I may ſay ſo, on the ſeeming caprice of this faculty,

culty, before we were made ſenſible of it by repeated experiences. The ideas that are lodged there begin to fade almoſt as ſoon as they are framed. They are continually ſlipping from us, or ſhifting their forms; and if the objects that excited ſome did not often renew them, and if we had not a power to recal others before they are gone too far out of the mind, we ſhould loſe our ſimple, and much more our complex ideas, and all our notions would become confuſed and obſcure. The mind would be little more than a channel, through which ideas and notions glided from entity into non-entity. But our caſe is not ſo bad. They are often renewed, and we can recal them as often as we pleaſe. There is, however, a difference between the renewing of them, and the recalling of them. When ideas are renewed by the ſame objects that excited them firſt in the mind, they are renewed ſuch as they were. The light and heat of the ſun will cauſe the ſame ſenſations, and ſtronger perhaps of the ſame kind, in the man who has not ſeen one nor felt the other in many years, than they cauſed in him formerly. Juſt ſo any operation, or affection of the mind, which has been long unperceived, will appear the ſame it uſed to appear to our inward ſenſe, when it is perceived anew by reflection. But when we are forced to recal our complex ideas, the caſe is not the ſame, at leaſt when they are ſuch as are not in common uſe. Thoſe of mixed modes and relations, for inſtance, that philoſophers ſometimes employ, and to which the mind ſcarce ever

ever adverts on other occaſions, may well receive ſome alteration even when they are recalled readily, tho' this alteration is the leſs perceptible, perhaps, on account of that very readineſs with which they are recalled. But when they are recalled with difficulty, and dragged back ſlowly, as it were, and by pieces and parcels into the mind, it is no wonder if they receive much greater alteration. They are then in ſome ſort recompounded: and tho' this may be for the better, as well as for the worſe, yet ſtill they vary; and every variation of them begets ſome uncertainty and confuſion in our reaſoning. Thus it muſt be when, beſides our ſimple ideas, ſuch numberleſs collections of ſimple and complex ideas, and ſuch numberleſs combinations of all theſe into notions, are to be held together, and to be preſerved in their order by ſo weak a mental faculty as that of retention.

NAMES indeed are given to ſignify all our ideas and all our notions to ourſelves and to others, and to help the memory in meditation as well as in diſcourſe. When they are aſſigned to complex ideas, they are meant as knots, according to the very proper image Mr. LOCKE gives of them, to tie each ſpecific bundle of ideas together: and in theſe reſpects they are not only uſeful, but neceſſary. It happens, however, that names, far from having theſe effects, have ſuch very often as are quite contrary to theſe. Whilſt we retain the names of complex ideas and notions, we imagine that we retain the ideas and notions; but the ideas

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and notions ſhift and vary, whilſt the names remain the ſame. The ſcene of the mind, like a moving picture, muſt be governed with attention, that it may bring into our view the images we want, and as we want them. Otherwiſe ideas that are foreign to our actual train of thinking will frequently ruſh into our thoughts, and become objects of them whether we will or no. But there is another and a greater miſchief, which will flow from this conſtitution of the mind unleſs the utmoſt attention be employed, and often when it is. The former is a ſort of violence, which cannot be offered unperceived, and may be therefore reſiſted. This that I am going to mention ſteals ſo ſilently upon us, that we do not perceive it very often even when it has worked it's effect. When we recal our ideas and notions, whether this be done with eaſe or difficulty, we review them in ſome ſort: and if they are more liable to have been altered, we have a better chance for perceiving any alteration that may have been made in the determination of them. But when the ideas and notions we want, preſent themſelves, as it were of themſelves, to the mind, under their uſual names and appearances, we are apt to employ them without examination, and perhaps we advert very often to nothing more than the word by which we are uſed to ſignify them. In this manner our ideas and notions become unſteady imperceptibly: and I would not anſwer that ſomething may not happen to me of this kind, even in writing this eſſay, tho' I am on my guard againſt it. How much

much more muſt it happen to thoſe who are not thus on their guard?

Every man imagines that his ideas and notions are his own in every ſenſe, but every man almoſt deceives himſelf in this caſe. When we learn the names of complex ideas and notions, we ſhould accuſtom the mind to decompound them, as I believe it has been obſerved already, that we may verify theſe, and ſo make them our own, as well as learn to compound others. But very few are at this trouble; and the general turn of education is contrived to keep men from taking it. Bred to think as well as ſpeak by rote, they furniſh their minds, as they furniſh their houſes or clothe their bodies, with the fancies of other men, and according to the mode of the age and country. They pick up their ideas and notions in common converſation, or in their ſchools. The firſt are always ſuperficial, and both are commonly falſe. Theſe are defects in the firſt determination of our ideas and notions: and if we join to theſe the obſtinacy and negligence that become habitual in moſt men, we ſhall find no reaſon to be ſurpriſed that abſurd opinions are tenaciouſly embraced, and wildly and inconſiſtently defended. Uniformity of ideas in error would have, at leaſt, this advantage: error would be more eaſily detected and more effectually exploded.

But ſuppoſing the contrary of all this, ſuppoſing our ideas and notions to have been determined

mined truly, and preſerved ſteadily, we muſt not flatter ourſelves that we are quite ſecure againſt the evil conſequence that is obſerved in this place to flow from the imperfect conſtitution of the human mind. The very temper of the mind, a little too much remiſſneſs, or a little too much agitation, affections that are grown up, or paſſions that are inflamed, may occaſion ſome alteration in our ideas and notions, in the very moment that we employ them. If it be ſmall, it will be unperceived by us. If it be great, the affection or paſſion that cauſed it will excuſe it, perhaps juſtify it to us. But however ſmall and almoſt imperceptible, even to a cool mind that is on it's guard againſt it's own weakneſs, ſuch alterations may be, each in itſelf; yet, beſides that each of them may produce others, each of them, tho' ſmall in the idea or notion, may become of great conſequence in the courſe of that reaſoning, wherein this idea or notion is frequently employed, or which turns perhaps upon it. A few ideas, or parts of ideas, that ſlip out of the bundle of covetouſneſs, make it the bundle of frugality: and a few, added to that of frugality, make it the bundle of covetouſneſs.

Thus it happens when we diſcourſe with ourſelves. But when we diſcourſe with others, the difficulty doubles; for beſides that of maintaining a ſteady determination of our own ideas and notions, we have the additional difficulty very often of communicating, and always of maintaining the

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ſame ſteady determination in thoſe of another. This is our caſe; that of every one in his turn, not only when mixed modes and relations, but in ſome degree even when ſubſtances, are our objects: and I perſuade myſelf that you have been more than once ready to laugh or cry, in the midſt of ſeveral rational creatures, who talked of things quite different, called them by the ſame names, and imagined that they talked of the ſame things. The choirs of birds who whiſtle and ſing, or ſcream at one another, or the herds of beaſts who bleat and lowe, or chatter and roar at one another, have juſt as much meaning, and communicate it juſt as well. At leaſt I preſume ſo, for I can affirm of no ſpecies but my own. All of them ſeem to have ideas, and theſe ſeem often to be better determined in the birds and beaſts, than in men. All of them ſeem to have, in theſe loud converſations, ſome general meaning. But none of them ſeem to have that preciſion, order, and connection of ideas and notions, which can alone make up rational diſcourſe,

Such is the common converſation, ſuch the ordinary correſpondence of men with one another. Such too, for the moſt part, are all the public diſcourſes that are held, and the ſolemn harangues of the pulpit. But the matter grows ſtill worſe when any controverſy is concerned. Tho' truth be one, and every neceſſary truth be obvious enough, yet that there muſt be various opinions about it among creatures conſtituted as we are,

is as certain as that there are ſuch opinions. Truth however is ſeldom the object, as reaſon is ſeldom the guide; but every man's pride, and every man's intereſt requires that both ſhould be thought to be on his ſide. From hence all thoſe diſputes, both public and private, which render the ſtate of ſociety a ſtate of warfare, the warfare of tongues, pens, and ſwords. In that of the two firſt, with which alone we have to do here, diſputes become conteſts for ſuperiority between man and man, and party and party; inſtead of being what they ſhould be, compariſons of opinions, of facts, and reaſons: by which means each ſide goes off with triumph, and every diſpute is a drawn battle. This is the ordinary courſe of controverſy, not among the vulgar alone, but among ſage philoſophers and pious divines, whoſe conduct is not more edifying than that of the vulgar. Will it be pretended that the ſchools of religion and learning have, in this reſpect, any advantage over other public aſſemblies, over coffee-houſes and taverns? If it is, we may ſafely deny it; becauſe we can eaſily prove the contrary. In vain will it be urged, that men who have much learning, and who are accuſtomed to inveſtigate, and to fix the moſt abſtruſe and momentous truths, muſt of courſe, and even without ſuperior parts, be better able nicely to diſcern, to determine, and to compare and to connect ideas and notions, than thoſe who neither poſſeſs the ſame learning and the ſame habits, nor have the ſame art of reaſoning. This may be in ſome reſpects true, but upon the

whole it is not ſo: and a plain man would overwhelm the ſcholar who ſhould hold this language, by ſhewing, in numerous inſtances, the weakneſs of the human mind, that of this very ſcholar, perhaps in ſome; the narrow confines, and in them the inſtability, of our ideas and notions, the impertinence of logic, the futility of metaphyſics, the blaſphemy of divinity, and the fraud of diſputation.

The beſt, and even ſuch as paſs for the faireſt controverſial writers, improve by artifice the natural infirmity of the human mind, and do on purpoſe what is here lamented as an evil not always to be avoided. They confound ideas, and perplex the ſignifications of their ſigns ſo as may ſerve beſt the intention, not of diſcovering truth, but of having the laſt word in the diſpute. This practice is ſo common, and eſpecially where favorite intereſts, and on their account favorite tenets, are concerned, that I think no writings of this ſort can be produced, wherein it is not employed, more or leſs, on both ſides. How indeed ſhould it be otherwiſe, when ſkill in diſputation is eſteemed a great part of learning, and the moſt ſcandalous frauds are applauded under the name of ſubtilty? Whatever excites men to it, whether pride, or ſelf-intereſt, or habitual and inveterate prepoſſeſſion and bigotry, by which they are induced to think that the worſt means may be employed to ſerve the beſt cauſe, which is always the cauſe they have embraced, it is fraud ſtill. It is pious fraud,

fraud, if you pleaſe: I would rather call it theological; but the doctor who ſhifts the idea, and keeps the word appropriated to it, that he may ſerve any purpoſe, is as arrant a cheat as the ſaint who interpreted the ſame paſſage of ſcripture in different ſenſes, according to the different opinions his orthodoxy required him to oppoſe. We may lament the imperfections of the human mind, we may blame thoſe who do not give their attention to learn, and to preſerve their ideas and notions, with all the exactneſs neceſſary to make them materials of knowledge, not of error. But we have a right to abominate thoſe who do their utmoſt to render the diſcovery of truth impracticable, to perpetuate controverſy, and to pervert the uſe and deſign of language. I prefer ignorance to ſuch learning, SWIFT's bagatelle to ſuch philoſophy, and the diſputes of a club where it does not prevail, to thoſe of an academy or univerſity where it does.

IT is, in truth, in thoſe places, and wherever methaphyſics and theology have been made ſciences, that the arts of controverſial legerdemain are practiſed with moſt licence, dexterity, and ſucceſs. Ideas of corporeal ſubſtance are not ſo liable to vary, nor ſo expoſed to perplexity and confuſion by the abuſe of words, as the ideas that we have, or rather that we ſuppoſe we have, of thinking ſubſtance. Every complex idea of any corporeal ſubſtance is not the ſame preciſe collection of ſimple ideas in every mind. But the

moſt ſenſible of it's qualities, thoſe that are the moſt obvious to us according to the buſineſs we have with it, ſuch as mark moſt, and diſtinguiſh enough, are put together in every mind. The peaſant has not the ſame idea of gold as the miner, nor the miner as the chemiſt. This will be ſaid, and it will be ſo far true, that the chemiſt will have more ideas of qualities co-exiſting in this metal than the miner, and the miner more than the peaſant. But the collection of ſimple ideas in the mind of him who has feweſt will be ample, and diſtinct enough to fix the ſort there, and to anſwer all his purpoſes: and, as long as nature maintains theſe collections of ſenſible qualities, the ideas of them can be neither confounded, nor loſt. As long as gold, and iron, and men, and horſes are in the world, their complex ideas will exiſt in human minds invariably: and tho' they may be more complex in ſome than in others, yet the additional ideas that increaſe, will not alter the collection enough to beget any material ambiguity.

The caſe is widely different when thinking ſubſtance becomes the object of our contemplation, when philoſophers pretend, by a ſuppoſed ſcience, not only to ſpiritualiſe matter in ſome ſort, if you will allow me to expreſs myſelf ſo, and to conſider forms abſtracted from all matter, incorporeal eſſences, and intelligible natures; but to reaſon and dogmatiſe about immaterial ſpirits, and to make ſouls, for inſtance, as many as they want,

ſouls

ſouls for the world, for men, for all other animals, and for vegetables; ſouls rational and irrational, ſouls immaterial, and ſouls of ſo fine a texture, that they approach immateriality, tho' they are material. All ſuch ideas and notions, and all ſuch as are framed concerning them, are ill determined, and conſequently ill preſerved. Uncertain in their origin, they muſt needs be unſteady in their progreſs, and in the uſe that philoſophers and divines make of them. Our ideas of corporeal ſubſtances are, no doubt, inadequate and ſuperficial, and ſuch as cannot reach the eſſence of any one particular ſubſtance; but they reach far enough for our uſe: and as far as this uſe is concerned, nay even a little further, the ſyſtem of corporeal ſubſtances lies open to us. They are criterions in our power; and according to them we verify, correct, and maintain by obſervation and experience, as we acquire, the preciſe determinations of our ideas of them. But when we proceed from phyſics to that which is called metaphyſics, and pretend to knowledge of general natures and immaterial beings, what do we leſs than pretend to general knowledge, where we are not capable of having even particular knowledge, properly ſo called? and to particular knowledge, where we have no criterion ſufficient to verify, correct, and maintain all the ideas and notions that we put together in order to compoſe ſomething that paſſes for it? The ſole criterion we have of immaterial ſpirit is our own ſpirit. The idea we have of thought by reflection, is as clear as that we have of extenſion by ſenſation.

The ideas we have of ſome few modes of thinking are as clear as thoſe we have of numberleſs modes of extenſion. So far then we have a criterion, by which to judge of the immaterial ſpirits we are pleaſed to create. I call them the creatures of metaphyſics and theology; becauſe in truth, conſidered as diſtinct ſubſtances, they are ſuch. All ſpirits are hypothetical, except the infinite ſpirit, the father of ſpirits, the Supreme Being. But how confined is this criterion, that extends no wider, nor riſes any higher, than the narrow confines, wherein we have perceptions of the operations of our own minds? They afford much room for imagination, and few means of knowledge. Our ideas of knowledge and power for inſtance, that ariſe from the perceptions we have of our own ſpirits, are applicable to them, and triable by them. But as ſoon as metaphyſicians and divines preſume to apply them improperly, to reaſon concerning the knowledge of the Supreme Being on thoſe of the firſt ſort, which have in this application no criterion; and to reaſon concerning the liberty of man on thoſe of the ſecond ſort, without a due regard to what we experience in ourſelves, which is their true criterion; how vague, and how unſteady do all theſe ideas, and theſe notions we frame by them, become? Of how much incoherent diſcourſe, of how many repugnant opinions has not this abſurd manner of philoſophiſing been productive? In a word, and to conclude this ſubject, here at leaſt, all our metaphyſical and theological ideas and notions are vague and unſteady, as well

as

as phantastical, for the most part, for want of criterions by which it is in our power to try them in the subjects about which we employ them, or for want of trying them by the criterions by which it is in our power to try them.

These inconveniences the lovers of truth may easily avoid. We are under no obligation to be metaphysicians or divines. But there is another inconveniency not so easy to be avoided on subjects more important, because more real than those commonly called metaphysical and theological. The inconveniency I mean to speak of here, and have referred to already, consists in the difficulty of preserving steadily some of our ideas and notions when they are well determined, rightly taken from the nature of things, and tried and approved by their proper criterions. Mathematical, as well as moral ideas and notions, are made by the mind: and tho' suggested to it by sensible objects, yet both are properly creatures of the mind, and there they remain to be employed as architypes. Thus far both are in the same case. But the difference that follows is great in itself, and in it's consequences. The mathematician can call his senses in at every instant to aid his intellect; and by making his ideas become objects of his sight, as he does when he draws diagrams that are copies of them on paper, he not only pursues steadily, but is able to communicate to others, demonstrations which he could neither pursue, nor retain by the strength of his mental faculties alone, nor

explain to others by the help of words. Words are ſigns, not copies of ideas. An idea, a moral idea, for inſtance, may be eſſentially changed, and the ſign that ſtood for it before may ſtand for it afterwards, without cauſing always an immediate perception in the mind of this change. But whenever the leaſt change is made in any idea of which we have before our eyes an outward viſible copy, that change is perceived inſtantly; and the determination of ideas, which the mind is unable to maintain, is thus maintained by one of our ſenſes. Moral ideas and notions, therefore, of which no ſuch copies can be made, which are held together in the mind with the names aſſigned to them by nothing but the retentive power of the mind, and which can be ſignified by nothing but ſounds that bear no reſemblance to them, muſt fluctuate and vary, beget all the confuſion, ſpread all the obſcurity, and give occaſion to all the fraud I have mentioned.

Definitions, it has been ſaid, will prevent, or remedy this evil; and morality may be placed, by the help of them, "among the ſciences capable "of demonſtration." That the firſt and great principles of natural religion may be demonſtrated, and that ingenuous minds may be trained to make a juſt application of them in ſome particular caſes, I acknowledge. But that the preciſe meaning of moral words can be ſo fixed and maintained, that the congruity or incongruity of the ideas and notions they ſtand for ſhall be always

always diſcerned clearly and uniformly, I do not believe. Definitions, therefore, conſiſting of words, they cannot anſwer Mr. LOCKE's purpoſe, as it would not be hard to ſhew in the very inſtances he brings. Intellect, the artificer, works lamely without his proper inſtrument, ſenſe; which is the caſe when he works on moral ideas. Whenever he can employ this inſtrument, and as far as it can ſerve him, which is the caſe when he works on mathematical ideas, he works ſecurely. I apprehend, therefore, that to expect a new method ſhould be ever found, of preſerving as ſteadily and invariably our moral ideas and notions, as we preſerve thoſe that are mathematical, is not very different from expecting that a method ſhould be found, ſome time or other, of rendering things, that are not objects of ſight by nature, viſible by art. Ideas and notions of virtue and vice, very clearly defined, have been often confounded by ſchoolmen and caſuiſts, in the moſt flagrant caſes. They are ſo ſtill by them and others in moſt diſcourſes, and in all diſputes about political or moral affairs. But no mathematician ever confounded the idea of any triangle with that of a ſquare, nor that of a ſquare with that of a circle.

SECT. V.

I HAVE dwelled the longer on complex ideas and notions, becauſe tho' ſimple ideas are truly the firſt principles of all our knowledge, yet the complex

plex ideas into which they are compounded by nature, and the complex ideas and notions into which we compound them by the operations of our minds, are the more ready and immediate principles on which we endeavour to establish general knowledge. We could not attain it even in such degrees as are proportionable to our wants, and to the design of infinite wisdom in making us what we are, in placing us where we are, and in giving us the faculties we have, without their assistance. If then these ideas and notions are so limited, as I have described them, by nature, and if we must often limit them still more by judgment that they may be still more surely productive of real knowledge; if within this extent too they are so liable to be inaccurately framed, unsteadily maintained, and uncertainly communicated, there will result from these considerations sufficient reasons to confound the pride of philosophers, and to expose the vanity of much pretended science. But these reasons acquire still greater force when we add some further considerations to the former. The lesson of nature, as I have called it, that is, the information and instruction we gain by observing the constitution of our physical and moral systems, and the state and course of things that exist constantly, or transiently in them, ends with our complex ideas and notions. When nature leaves us, we are forced to put ourselves, in our ulterior progress towards general knowledge, under the conduct of her mimic, art: so that if our feet are apt to slip, if we totter

totter in the way, and are ſubject to ramble out of it, whilſt nature is our guide, all this muſt needs happen much more when we have no other guide but art, and when we are reduced to ſupply natural imperfection by expedients. The truth is, the further we proceed under the conduct of art, the further we attempt to carry our thoughts beyond thoſe originals whereby nature, obtruding on ſenſe complex ideas of what does exiſt, and ſuggeſting ideas and notions of what may exiſt, informs and inſtructs the mind; the more liable we are to fall into error by framing our ideas and notions wrong, by preſerving unſteadily even thoſe that we frame right, by preſuming that we have ideas when we have really none, or that we know what we mean when we have no meaning at all. Metaphyſicians and divines have raiſed their reputations on little elſe: and it will be worth our while to examine the truth of this aſſertion in ſome few inſtances, among many that might be produced. I ſay, it will be worth our while, becauſe the errors in opinion, like the faults in conduct, of the greateſt men are of the worſt conſequence, and deſerve the moſt to be detected; becauſe theſe philoſophers, above all other men, have rendered the human mind the flatterer, the deceiver, and the debaucher of itſelf, "blanda adulatrix, et quaſi "lena ſui;" in ſhort, becauſe they have ſubſtituted mental artifice in the place of mental art, and have thereby encouraged mankind to continue ridiculouſly an imaginary progreſs in ſearch of

of ſcience, when nature and art are both at a ſtand.

How difficult, nay how impracticable the enlargement of knowledge, and the communication of our thoughts to one another would be, if we remained abſolutely confined to particulars, and unleſs means were found of ſupplying this defect, is obvious to reflection. The mind, therefore, makes it's utmoſt efforts to generaliſe it's ideas, begins early with ſuch as are moſt familiar, comes in time to thoſe that are leſs ſo, and is never at reſt till it has found means of conceiving as well as it can it's ideas collectively, and of ſignifying them in that manner to others. Complex ideas are made by uniting ſeveral ſimple ideas, that have often no connexity nor relation to each other except what the mind gives them, in one idea. General ideas, or notions are attempted by endeavouring to aſſemble in one a variety of ideas, or notions, that have a relation or likeneſs to each other. Nature helps in the firſt of theſe operations, as we have obſerved above; and we perform it, or we may perform it, with ſucceſs. But ſhe affords us little or no help in the laſt; and we fail in the attempt. She ſhews us men, but not man in general: and the ſame may be ſaid of all other ſubſtances. She ſhews us, or we frame, ideas of particular figures; but neither does ſhe ſhew us, nor can we frame, any idea of figure in general, nor general ideas of particular kinds of figure, any more than we can frame a general idea of

ſubſtance,

ſubſtance, or of any particular kinds of ſubſtances. Once more, ſhe ſhews us particular actions, and inſtances of behaviour of men towards men, or we frame ideas in our minds of ſuch particular actions, or inſtances of behaviour, and we term them juſt, or unjuſt; but neither does ſhe ſhew us, nor can we frame, any idea of moral or immoral in general, no, nor any general idea of theſe particular kinds, juſt and unjuſt. The mind would make all theſe creatures if it could; but not having this natural power, an art is properly and uſefully employed to make particular ideas ſerve the purpoſes of general, by giving them the rank of architypes in the mind, and to make particular notions become general, by compriſing them in definitions that we refer to as to architypes of particular kinds. Thus knowledge, particular by nature, becomes in ſome degree general by art.

It would be abſurd to imagine, as ſome philoſophers have imagined, that nature caſts her productions in certain ſpecific moulds. But we may ſay, when we ſpeak of things as they appear to us, that they are claſſed in different ſorts, which we diſtinguiſh by our ſenſations. Our ſimple ideas are many, as many as the ſenſible qualities of outward objects that excite them in us. But the various combinations of theſe ſimple into complex ideas of ſubſtances are innumerable; and yet each of theſe combinations is as diſtinctly and uniformly perceived by us, as the ſimple ideas contained in it. By this it is, and without this

this it could not be, that both of them answer God's design, and man's use. If mankind in general did not receive the same impressions, and by these impressions the same sensations, from outward objects, much confusion and disorder would arise in human life. Without troubling ourselves to enquire, like * MALEBRANCHE, whether the same motions of the fibres are constantly produced by the same objects, or whether the same sensations are constantly produced, and the same ideas excited in the soul by the same motions of the fibres, of all which he knew no more than such ignorant men as you and I are; let us content ourselves to understand this uniformity as it has been explained in the third section, and conformably to experience.

THIS being established, we may observe further, that the mind proceeds to generalise, in the utmost extent, the simple ideas it has got, tho' not the complex ideas of substances; as if, the component ideas being generalised, men had perceived there was no need of generalising the complex ideas compounded of them and of something whereof they had only an obscure idea suggested to the mind by all their sensations, an idea of substance wherein the sensible qualities producing simple ideas inhered. In the case, therefore, of simple ideas, we employ, to speak the language of philosophy, not only concrete but abstract terms; and we say, for instance, not only that

* Recherche de la verité, liv. i. c. 13.

milk

milk or snow is white, but we talk of whites in general, and signify them by the abstract term whiteness. The adjective white, joined to a substantive, is the sign of a particular idea, and necessary therefore, as well as proper, to be used in speaking of particular substances, by every one of which it is determined. But the substantive whiteness is authorised by custom alone, and is determined by nothing. It is a term invented by the art of the mind. When it is used, I perceive no determinate, specific, general idea, wherein all the various tints of white which I have perceived, and many there may be which no human eye has ever perceived, are comprehended. I have no perception of a general idea of white abstracted from every particular idea of this sort. The idea I have, when this word is used, is always that of some particular white extension, or of several such whose ideas rush confusedly into the mind together.

In the case of substances, the art of the mind is not carried quite so far, tho' it makes, as we grow up, by observation and experience, some attempts of this kind towards general knowledge. The child who prattled of papa and mama, of Crop and Tray, advances in years, and talks of man and woman, of horse and dog, and soon after of animal. He learns certain common names, by which he signifies beings that appear to him alike, and give him nearly the same complex ideas. He learns another common name

still

ſtill more comprehenſive, by which he ſignifies things that do not give him, even nearly, the ſame complex ideas, but that are confined however to the ſame claſs by ſome peculiar, ſimple ideas, and contradiſtinguiſhed by them from every other claſs more or leſs. The words man, or animal, raiſe in his mind no general idea; but in this caſe, as in the former, ſome particular idea of man, which the mind can frame without thinking of ALEXANDER, or HENRY, riſes there, and becomes repreſentative of all men in general: or elſe ſeveral ideas of men, and other animals, ruſh confuſedly into the mind together; that is, ſo rapidly, that tho' they are truly ſucceſſive, yet this ſucceſſion is imperceptible. Thus far the art of the mind is carried towards a general knowledge of ſubſtances; and cuſtom has authoriſed it no further. The ſchools indeed invented, among many other words to which they had no clear nor determinate ideas annexed, thoſe of humanity and animality. Now if nothing more had been intended by thoſe words than to ſignify, by one ſound, all that we underſtand when we ſpeak of the apparent natures of men and animals, ſuch as they appear to our ſenſes, I cannot ſee that they deſerved to be rejected; and I ſhall make no ſcruple to uſe them if the occaſion of doing ſo preſents itſelf. But if they are employed by any profound ontoſophiſt, as they were by the ſchoolmen, who pretended to have ſuch general ideas abſtracted from all particulars,

ideas

ideas of general natures and real eſſences of ſubſtances; they deſerve to be rejected as much as the gobleity and tableity of PLATO, with which the cynic made himſelf ſo merry. Even the general names of ſimple ideas of ſenſation can be received, according to my apprehenſion, in no ſenſe but the former: and whiteneſs, if we aſſumed that we had ſuch a general idea, abſtracted from all particulars, and adequate to the real eſſence of white, would deſerve to be exploded as much as humanity and animality. All theſe words muſt be confined to their proper uſe, and not applied to any other ſignification. In the firſt caſe they will be ſubſervient to an art, in the latter, to an artifice of the mind.

THE ſame caution, that is to be had when the mind generaliſes it's ſimple and complex ideas of ſubſtances, is to be had, and the ſame diſtinction is to be made between general and abſtract ideas, in the ſenſe in which the latter are ſuppoſed by ſome philoſophers to be framed by the mind, when we employ words to ſignify our ideas of modes and relations. We ſay, for inſtance, not only that certain figures are triangular, but we diſcourſe of triangularity. We ſay not only that ſuch an action is juſt, but we diſcourſe of juſtice. We ſay not only that ſuch things are ſimilar or like, but we diſcourſe of ſimilitude or likeneſs. We have not however any ideas of ſuch general natures abſtracted from all the particular ideas that we ſuppoſe to be comprehended in them.

Theſe words triangularity, juſtice, likeneſs, recall to the mind ſome particular idea or notion of each ſort, or elſe a confuſion of particular ideas or notions, as was ſaid in the caſe of ſubſtances. They excite no other idea nor notion. But yet the difference between the two caſes is vaſt. Our ideas and notions of modes and relations being creatures of the mind, tho' we are unable to frame any that are not particular in their ſeveral kinds, and have by conſequence in our minds no idea nor notion, abſtracted and diſtinct from all the particular ideas and notions that the mind has framed of every kind; yet the real eſſence of each particular being, the particular idea or notion that the mind has framed, we are able to aſcertain by definitions, and to reduce into propoſitions a general nature of which every particular idea or notion does, and muſt partake, to be of that kind, that is, to be what it is. I do not know, and therefore I cannot define, nor advance propoſitions concerning ſubſtance in general, nor the real eſſence of any particular ſubſtance, nor by conſequence the manner in which, and qualities by which, they produce the ſimple and complex ideas I receive from them; nor finally the conformity, if any ſuch there is, between all theſe ideas and their architypes. But I know, and can define the real eſſence of all triangles; which I name triangularity. Tho' I have no idea of triangularity "abſtracted with pains and ſkill from "the ſeveral ſpecies of triangles, and preſent to "the mind independently of them;" yet I know that

that this definition, "a ſpace included by three "lines, that meet at three angles," contains in it the real eſſence of every particular triangle whereof I have the idea. A philoſopher may take as much pains as he pleaſes to abſtract from thoſe particulars wherein the ſpecies differ, and to retain thoſe only wherein they agree, which CUDWORTH calls the cutting off chips, as I remember: tho' he frames, by this method, the definition I have mentioned; yet neither he who framed it, nor his ſcholar who learned it, will be able, I preſume, to conſider a "ſpace included by three lines that "meet at three angles," without having ſome particular triangle in his mind. If we had an abſtract idea of triangularity, properly ſo called, it might be ſaid to be the idea of all triangles; but it could not be ſaid, as it has been ſaid, to be the idea of none. In ſhort, we define the general nature of triangles on the conſideration of particular triangles: and this definition is a true propoſition in abſtract conſideration, tho' it be not an abſtract idea. But to make it of any uſe, we muſt deſcend to particular knowledge again; that is, to particular, real ideas, which might have been purſued, tho' the terms of this definition had never been invented.

THUS, again, I know the general nature, the real eſſence, of juſtice, and am able to define it in very clear propoſitions, tho' I am not able to frame any general idea or notion of it abſtracted from all particulars, and containing them all. It is

not, moſt certainly, to do as we would be done by; for that is more properly a definition of benevolence, than of juſtice, as every one, who conſiders the conſtant force and the occaſional injuſtice of ſelf-love, muſt admit. But it conſiſts in a diſpoſition to give to every one what is his own, where there is property; to deal by others according to the natural fitneſs or unfitneſs of things where there is no property; and in other diſtinct notions, which will altogether amount to a definition, if we may be ſaid to define when we only enumerate particular notions: and we can do nothing more when we ſet about to explain the general nature of juſtice; for which I may appeal to every man who has meditated well on this ſubject. To conclude; I know the general nature, and the real eſſence of likeneſs, and am able to explain it by a very ſhort definition; for it conſiſts in that relation which ariſes from an uniformity of appearance in things that are diſtinct in exiſtence. But ſtill I have no general idea nor notion of this relation, abſtracted from all my particular ideas of things ſo related *.

* THESE diſputes about abſtraction may be deemed after all, perhaps, to be purely verbal. A looſe determination of the word idea may have given occaſion to them. A proper diſtinction between ideas and notions may help to reconcile them. Theſe two words are commonly uſed by inadvertency and habit, or authority, as if they were ſynonimous. Mr. LOCKE, and even his antagoniſt in this diſpute, the biſhop of CLOYNE, have uſed them ſo. I have done the ſame in all I have writ to you. But I think that the example before us ſhews how neceſſary it is to diſtinguiſh them, in order to maintain a philoſophical preciſion of terms.

WHAT

WHAT advances now do we make in general knowledge by this expedient which the art of the

THE word idea ſhould, I preſume, be held to ſignify one ſingle perception of the mind, whether ſimple or complex, whether produced by the impreſſions of outward objects, or by the operations of our own minds, by ſenſation or reflection. Theſe ideas are preſerved in the memory by frequent repetitions of the ſame impreſſions, and the ſame operations. But thoſe of them which can be painted, as it were, on the canvaſs of the mind, like ſingle objects of internal ſight, and like pictures of the original impreſſions which were made on it, or of the original forms which were raiſed in it, are beſt preſerved and moſt ſteadily determined. They are all particular, and have no generality but that of application. They repreſent to the mind that which does, or may exiſt. Of that which neither does, nor can exiſt, we can have no idea. The ideal man, or the ideal horſe, which the mind perceives, is a particular idea that repreſents all the men, and all the horſes that exiſt, or ever did exiſt; and the ideal triangle is as truly a particular idea that repreſents all the triangles that exiſt, or can exiſt in the mind, or out of it. The mind indeed has a power of varying, without deſtroying the idea: for inſtance, it adds wings to the man, and to the horſe; one becomes an angel, the other an hippogriph; and as it can repreſent the ideal man to be white or black, crooked or ſtrait, ſo it can repreſent the triangle to be rectangle, oblique, equilateral, equicrural, or ſcalenon. Thus far the mind can generaliſe it's ideas: and I think myſelf ſure that mine can generaliſe them no further. But when we have been accuſtomed to call every thing an idea that is an object of the mind in thinking, we fall eaſily into that confuſion of language, whereby men are led very often, as I apprehend that they are in the preſent caſe, to diſpute, and to mean the ſame thing. We might avoid it, I preſume, if we diſtinguiſhed between ideas and notions, if we conceived the former to be particular in their nature, and general only by their application, and the latter to be general in their nature, and particular only by their application; in ſhort, if we conſidered how notions ſucceed ideas, and how they become the immediate inſtruments of general knowledge, when theſe can be ſuch no longer. Particular ideas of actual, or poſſible exiſtence, are made ge-

mind has invented? Nor ſuch as philoſophers would have believed, but ſome however. Tho' we

neral in ſome ſort, that is, in their effect, as it has been ſaid, and as it is allowed on all hands. But the power of generaliſing ideas is ſo inſufficient, that it goes no further. We make one phantaſm of a man ſtand for all men, and one of an horſe for all horſes; but here our progreſs by ideas, that is, by ſingle perceptions of the mind, ſtops. We have none of humanity, nor of horſeity, and much leſs have we any of animality. Juſt ſo the phantaſm of a particular triangle ſtands for every triangle of that ſpecies, but we have no idea of triangularity, and much leſs of figure. We make a particular ſtand for a general idea in this caſe, as in the two former; but in no caſe can we make ideas that are particular, and that can repreſent only what does, or may exiſt, become ideas of general natures that cannot exiſt. There is however a great difference between caſes of the former, and caſes of the latter kind. The eſſences of ſubſtances are abſolutely unknown to us, but the eſſences of complex modes are perfectly known, ſo that we have clear and diſtinct notions, tho' we cannot have clear and diſtinct ideas, nor indeed any ideas at all of them. From the contemplation of particular triangles we collect a notion of their general nature. We do more; by contemplating the various terminations of finite extenſion, we collect a notion of the general nature of figure. We have ideas of theſe no more than we have ideas of humanity or animality, but we know what we mean, and are able to explain our meaning when we ſpeak of theſe, which we are not when we ſpeak of the others.

Much more might be ſaid to ſhew the difference between complex ideas and notions, and between general and abſtract ideas, and the advantage that thoſe (in the conception of which, internal ſenſe, and in the communication of which, external ſenſe help intellect) have over ſuch as are merely objects of intellect. I might expoſe, even to ridicule, the ſtir that is made about the pains and ſkill our maſters pretend that they take to form the ſuppoſed idea of triangularity, for inſtance, that they may teach their ſcholars to know a triangle when they ſee it; tho' the meaneſt of their ſcholars, who have

cannot

cannot by any power of the mind frame ideas of general natures and eſſences, which neither do nor can exiſt ſeparately from particulars, yet is it ſome advance to be able to comprehend, under one conſideration, a great number of particulars, by appropriating general names to the ſeveral lots, if the term may be allowed me, into which the mind has ſorted it's ideas and notions. The expedient facilitates extremely, as every man who thinks muſt obſerve, not only the communication of our thoughts to others, but the progreſs of them in their ſeveral trains, and all the operations of the mind about it's ideas; for tho' theſe general names have no abſtract ideas annexed to them, nor, ſtrictly ſpeaking, any ideas or notions, yet are they not unaccompanied by ideas and notions. That would be to have no meaning at all, whereas they have a meaning, a plain and uſeful meaning or intention. What they have not, they borrow. They create no ideas in the mind, but they give occaſion to the mind to collect and apply ſuch ideas and notions as are there already. They call them forth, they marſhal them, as it were: and by the manner in which, and by the occaſions on which, they do ſo, theſe names produce all the effect they are deſigned to produce, and

been uſed to contemplate particular triangles, will have made this notable diſcovery, "that every triangle is a ſpace com-"prehended by three lines, and containing three angles," without any help of theirs, or ſkill or pains of his own. All the merit of our maſters ſeems to be this, they begin to learn at the right, they begin to teach at the wrong, end; which is an obſervation that may be enforced by what Mr. Locke himſelf ſays about maxims.

carry us towards general knowledge as far as our feeble intellect can crawl with their aſſiſtance, and much further than we could advance without it.

I THINK I have ſaid nothing here which is not obvious and plain; and yet I have oppoſed, in almoſt all I have ſaid, men of the greateſt name in philoſophy. But when we muſt oppoſe them, or belie intuitive knowledge, there is no reaſon to heſitate. I know that, tho' I can make ſome abſtractions of my ideas, I am utterly unable to make ſuch abſtractions as Mr. LOCKE and other great maſters of reaſon have taken it for granted that they could and did make. This I know as intuitively, and as certainly, as I know that I exiſt. If the difference lay in the degree alone, I ſhould readily acknowledge that other men might abſtract better, and further, than myſelf. But I am conſcious that there is no ſuch power in my mind in any degree, and therefore, I conclude, ſince we are all made of the ſame clay, a little coarſer or a little finer, that there is no ſuch power in their minds. I conclude, after my lord BACON, that, "ſince abſtract ideas have been introduced, and "their dignity exalted with ſo much confidence "and authority, the dreaming part of mankind "has in a manner prevailed over the waking." If Mr. LOCKE could dream he had ſuch a power as he deſcribes this of abſtracting to be (a power to form, with "ſome pains and ſkill, the general "idea of a triangle," for inſtance, "neither ob-"lique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equi-

"crural,

" crural, nor ſcalenon, but all, and none of theſe " at once *") let writers learn to be leſs dogmatical, and readers to be leſs implicit. It is undeniable that there is ſuch a thing as philoſophical delirium. Men of the cooleſt tempers, we ſee, are liable to be ſeized by it; and when they are ſo, even their minds are apt to flatter, to deceive, and to debauch themſelves. I quote this as an inſtance of the mind's being debauched, as well as flattered, and deceived; for ſurely it is a ſort of debauchery to turn art into artifice: and he does no leſs, whether he means it or not, who, inſtead of employing general words for the purpoſes we have mentioned, vends them for ſigns of ideas abſtracted as no mortal could ever abſtract.

Since knowledge has increaſed their own knowledge and that of other men, philoſophers and divines have been forced to moderate their pretenſions. They have fallen a little in the value they had ſet on human intellect: and I ſuſpect, or rather I would hope, that they muſt fall a good deal more, how unwilling ſoever they may be to part with that tinſel which has paſſed ſo long for gold and ſilver. But there is ſtill a remainder of the old leaven in philoſophy. Many opinions, that were aſſumed without any proof, or on the ſlighteſt, are ſtill entertained as opinions, or eſtabliſhed as doctrines. Among theſe groſs errors there is ſcarce any more groſs, or of more extenſive influence, than this that ſup-

* Eſſay, l. iv. c. 7.

poſes

poſes a power in the mind, which the mind has not, and the reality of ideas of general natures, tho' theſe cannot exiſt abſtractedly from particulars. This error is the great principle on which many fine-ſpun logical and metaphyſical ſpeculations proceed, and from moſt of which we might be delivered, to the honor of common ſenſe, the improvement of real knowledge, and the advantage of mankind, if it was ſufficiently exploded. Till it is ſo, and as long as the leaven of this error among others continues to ferment, men will be apt to miſpend their time in ſearch of phantaſtic knowledge, by the means of imaginary powers. The field of knowledge, which BACON and DES CARTES, and LOCKE have purged of ſo many weeds, may be therefore over-run again by a new crop ſpringing from old roots that they neglected to grub, or helped to preſerve. Metaphyſics may not only maintain, but confirm and enlarge their empire. The lofty madneſs of PLATO, and the pompous jargon of ARISTOTLE, may be propagated again, with as great ſucceſs as ever, from thoſe colleges and ſchools that deſerved once the name of venerable bedlams. The learned of another generation may ſee, perhaps univerſally, immaterial eſſences and eternal ideas in the divine mind; they may contemplate ſubſtantial forms, and comprehend even the entelechia, whilſt they neither ſee viſible, nor feel ſolid, extenſion. All this may happen; and if dulneſs ſhould re-eſtabliſh her empire in poetry, whilſt that of madneſs is reſtored in philoſophy, how

how glorious an age may the next become, when all the defects, and all the follies of this are complete? Once more, all this may happen. Our learned queen intereſts herſelf in nice and ſubtile diſputations about ſpace: from metaphyſics ſhe riſes to theology. She attends frequently to the controverſy, almoſt fourteen hundred years old, and ſtill carried on with as much warmth, and as little ſucceſs, as ever, about that profound myſtery the Trinity. She ſtudies with much application the "analogy of revealed religion to the "conſtitution and courſe of nature." She underſtands the whole argument perfectly, and concludes, with the right reverend author, that it is not "ſo clear a caſe that there is nothing in re-"vealed religion." Such royal, ſuch lucrative encouragement muſt needs keep both metaphyſics and the ſublimeſt theology in credit; and in ſhort,

"Signs following ſigns, lead on the mighty year."

In the mean time, let what has been here ſaid ſtand for one example of the arts employed by the mind to enlarge it's knowledge; and let it ſerve to ſhew how theſe arts degenerate into artifice, deceive even the mind that invented them, and, inſtead of enlarging knowledge, enlarge and multiply error.

ANOTHER example of the ſame kind it may be proper to conſider. HOBBES ſays ſomewhere, that words are the counters of wiſe men, and the money

ney of fools. The obſervation is juſt, and the expreſſion happy. Ideas and notions are the money of wiſe men, and they pay with theſe; whilſt they mark and compute with words, the money of fools. But yet ſo difficult is the intellectual commerce, ſo narrow the intellectual fund, that the wiſeſt men are frequently obliged to employ their money like counters, and their counters like money; in one caſe, however, without loſs, in the other without fraud. We may be ſaid to do the firſt, that is, to employ our money like counters, when we employ ideas of one kind to mark and to ſuggeſt ideas of another. We employ, as it were, in this caſe, good and current money of one ſpecies, to compute and fix the ſum payable in another: and thus guineas may ſtand in the place of ſhillings, or ſhillings ſerve to repreſent guineas. This happens whenever we make uſe of figures: and figures are ſo interwoven into language, that they make up a great part of our diſcourſe, and a greater than is commonly apprehended.

THE figurative ſtyle is peculiarly that of poets, or of the tribe neareſt allied to theirs, I mean orators. In this ſtyle the frightened wave returns: or CICERO, in his Philippics, thunders againſt ANTONY. To employ this ſtyle with true propriety is hard, no doubt. It muſt needs be hard to keep up an exact preciſion and propriety of ideas and words when two ſets of each are concerned, ſince it is extremely ſo to keep them up when one ſet of each is alone the buſineſs of the mind.

mind. It is hard for another reaſon; becauſe imagination, whoſe talents are neither preciſion nor propriety, not the former at leaſt, is employed in the application of one of theſe ſets of ideas and words to the other, and becauſe it rarely happens that great heat of imagination, and great coolneſs of judgment, that happy aſſociation which forms a genius, and appears eminently in all your writings, go together, and keep pace with one another. When they do ſo, the figurative ſtyle, that ſome of our neighbours have almoſt rejected even out of poetry, and that we have abuſed moſt licentiouſly in it, ſerves to enforce, as well as to explain and adorn, but never to deceive. Somebody has ſaid of the boldeſt figure in rhetoric, the hyperbole, that it lies without deceiving: and, if I may venture to make a little alteration, in a definition given by my lord BACON, I will ſay of rhetoric in general, the practice of which I eſteem much, the theory little, that it applies images, framed or borrowed by imagination, to ideas and notions which are framed by judgment, ſo as to warm the affections, to move the paſſions, and to determine the will; ſo as to aſſiſt nature, not to oppreſs her.

BUT beſides the uſe which poets make with ſome profuſion, as they have a right to do, and orators make, or ſhould make more ſparingly, of this art of the mind, which, transferring ideas from one ſubject to another, makes that become graceful

graceful and reaſonable, and thereby uſeful, when the application is judicious, which would be monſtrous and abſurd, and thereby hurtful, without it; there is another uſe, which the ſevereſt philoſophical writers may and do make of it in their meditations, as well as in their diſcourſes; an uſe, that, if it does not ſerve to increaſe, ſerves moſt certainly to facilitate and propagate knowledge. They who meditate (for every man, and probably every animal thinks) muſt have obſerved that the mind employs all it's forces, and memory and imagination among the reſt, not only to form opinions or to arrive at knowledge, but to ſet the objects of opinion, or knowledge, in the fulleſt and cleareſt light for its own ſatisfaction, and for the eaſe of communicating theſe thoughts to other minds in the ſame order, and with the ſame energy as they are contemplated by it. Not only judgment compares, in a ſteady train, ideas and notions that are preſent to it and thoſe that are intermediate, thoſe that ſagacity diſcovers to help the proceſs of comparing; but memory and the faculty of imagining are employed to bring in adventitious helps. Such they may be called: for tho' foreign ideas divert the attention of the mind when they break in unſought and by violence, they help it often when they have been ſought and are admitted by choice. They lead the mind, indirectly, and round about, as it were, in many caſes, to ſuch truths, or to ſuch evidence of truth, as could not have been attained ſo eaſily, nor ſo fully without them.

Mr.

Mr. Locke, in the preface to his famous Eſſay, as he entitled it with great modeſty, ſince it is ſurely the moſt complete work of this kind that any language can boaſt, excuſes himſelf for "dwelling long on the ſame argument ſometimes, and for expreſſing it different ways, by "alledging that ſome objects had need to be "turned on every ſide; and that when a notion "is new, it is not one ſimple view of it that will "gain it admittance into every underſtanding, "or fix it there with a clear and laſting impreſſion—that our underſtandings are no leſs "different than our palates;" and more to the ſame purpoſe. Now if it be neceſſary to preſent our notions to the view of others in ſeveral lights, and under variety of expreſſions, I cannot ſee why they ſhould not be ſometimes viewed thro' the medium of figure; nor why the palates of thoſe who reliſh this ſtyle ſhould not be gratified. Mr. Locke gratifies them in this very place, and in moſt pages of his work. What is the juxta-poſition of ideas? What is that chain which connects, by intermediate ideas that are the links of it, ideas that are remote, but figurative ſtyle? what elſe are thoſe dormant, that is, ſleeping pictures, which are awakened, as it were, and brought into appearance by an act of the mind? what elſe are the pictures drawn there, but laid in fading colors, or the images calcined to duſt by the flames of a fever? His invective, therefore, againſt figurative ſpeech, in his chapter of the

the abuſe of words, muſt be underſtood not of the uſe, but of the abuſe of this ſtyle, tho' it ſeems to go further; or it will not be agreeable to his own practice, nor to the truth, as I imagine. Falſe eloquence there is, no doubt, and fraudulent eloquence too. Figurative ſtyle often cauſes one, and is often employed by the other; but there is falſe and fraudulent reaſoning too without eloquence: and we may find as much trifling and fallacy in ſome of the moſt dry didactic writings, as can be ſhewn in thoſe of poets and orators.

Rhetoric may be a powerful inſtrument of deceit and error, and ſo may logic too. Both of them are impertinent when they are reduced into arts, and are cultivated and followed as ſuch. But if rhetoric were baniſhed out of the world, and logic with it, eloquence and reaſon would ſtill remain. Mr. Locke ſays very figuratively, and very eloquently, ſpeaking againſt figure and eloquence, that they have, "like the fair-ſex, too "prevailing beauties to be ſpoken againſt." He could not ſpeak againſt them out of their language. How ſhould he? We may diſaffect eloquence as much as we pleaſe, or nature may have ſaved us this trouble, by refuſing us the talent, but we muſt ceaſe to ſpeak if we lay figurative ſpeech wholly aſide. Figures are ſo neceſſary in the communication, at leaſt, of our thoughts, that they are wove into the very conſtitution of language, as we have obſerved already.

ready. If we did not chooſe, we ſhould be forced to employ them often in common converſation about common objects, and the ordinary affairs of life; and they are ſtill more neceſſary when ſubjects more abſtruſe and more abſtracted from ſenſible objects are concerned.

God alone knows how nearly external and internal ſenſe, of which we have one common perception, tho' the objects be different, and tho' the latter be occaſioned and limited by the former, are allied. All that will ever be ſaid to explain it, will explain no more than all that has been ſaid already. But, however, to aſſert that there is no other ſource of ideas, but ſenſation, is to aſſert ſomething moſt evidently falſe: for to explain what has been touched already, or hinted at leaſt, we have as determinate, and as clear ideas of thought, as of extenſion or ſolidity; of our inward faculties, of their operations, and of the modes of thinking, as of the powers, the actions, and the modifications of mere body. Were it otherwiſe, we ſhould have no intellectual ideas at all; for ideas, if they cannot be repreſented in thought without corporeal images, are not ſuch moſt certainly. But now, tho' corporeal images have nothing to do in framing, they have much to do, and bear a principal part in communicating intellectual ideas. I ſay a principal part only, for ſome of theſe are ſignified without their help. We ſay, that we perceive, diſcern, abſtract, compound, or compare our ideas; but we ſay

too, that we think, and that we know. The former expreſſions, and a multitude of others, are taken from outward, and applied figuratively to inward ſenſations. The latter, and ſome few others, perhaps, ſignify immediately, and without any figure, the intellectual idea they are deſigned to ſignify.

If we aſk how all this comes to paſs, the true anſwer ſeems obvious enough: By an art, which experience has ſuggeſted to the mind. The ideas of outward objects have their criterions in theſe objects. Body is the architype of corporeal ideas, and this criterion therefore is common to all mankind. But intellectual ideas having no ſenſible, have no ſuch common criterion. He who had firſt ideas of extenſion and ſolidity, and who invented the words, could explain his meaning by appealing to the ſenſes of other men. But he could not communicate his ideas of reflection by the ſame ſhort and eaſy method, the paſſion of his mind in receiving theſe ideas by ſenſation, nor the operations of his mind about them afterwards. He borrowed therefore corporeal images to expreſs them, and talked of perceiving, diſcerning, and ſo on, in the figurative ſtyle. Thus we may conceive how men came to employ corporeal ideas, for the moſt part to explain the intellectual phænomena, and ſometimes to aſſiſt even their own reflections on them. The art was reaſonably invented, and uſefully employed. But it ſoon became artifice, as ſoon as philoſophers

loſophers took into their heads to affect ſuch ſcience as they are incapable of attaining. Then it was that they employed, among many other expedients, the abſurd uſe of figures that figured no real ideas, nor any thing more than philoſophical dreams, and whimſies of overheated brains. The ſame practice has continued from that time to this, from PLATO down to MALBRANCHE, from ARISTOTLE down to LEIBNITZ, from PLOTINUS and JAMBLICUS down to AGRIPPA and FLUDD. It begins to grow out of date. Men require now ſomething more real than figure, more preciſe than alluſion, and more particular than metaphyſical abſtractions. Philoſophers may write as ſublimely as they pleaſe about pneumatics, or the doctrine of ſpirits, and as profoundly as they pleaſe about ontology, or the doctrine of Being abſtracted from all being. They will be taken up for amuſement, like other writers of romance, and be laid aſide like them, when any thing more worthy of attention preſents itſelf to the mind.

IT is time, indeed, that they ſhould be treated in this manner, and that men who betray themſelves ſhould impoſe no longer on others. When I ſay that they betray themſelves, I mean it particularly with regard to the inconſiſtency of their pretenſions and their practice. St. AUSTIN ſays, ſomewhere or other, for I quote the paſſage from the logic of PORT-ROYAL, that "men are ſo accuſtomed ſince the fall to conſider corporeal

"things alone, the images of which come into "the brain by the senses, that most of them "believe they cannot conceive a thing when "they cannot represent it to themselves under "a corporeal image." Such an one, I suppose, was the logician, who for want of enlarging his definition of idea, to whatever is an object of the mind in thinking, or for want of supplying this defect by a true definition of notion, which would have been better, perhaps, was so absurd, and so profane, as to advance that we conceive God under the image of a venerable old man, because we have no other sensible idea of him. But since the mistaken belief spoken of by St. Austin is owing to custom, and is that of most men only, I would ask why so great a philosopher and saint, as he was, followed this evil custom, and filled his works with more and more forced applications of corporeal images to intellectual and divine subjects than any writer, perhaps, of that metaphorising and allegorising age? Shall we say with one of his disciples, who in every other respect, and even in this, was his equal at least, that "the soul is become, since "the fall, as if it were corporeal by inclination, "and that the love it has for things sensible di-"minishes constantly the union, or the relation "it has to things intelligible*?" But besides that one of these fathers ascribes to a fatal necessity, what the other ascribes only to an ill habit, how can this happen to those extraordinary

* Recherche de la verité, l. i. c. 13.

men,

men, who abſtract their ſouls from every thing material, and wrap themſelves up in pure intellect ſo frequently, altho' they confeſs that "the "mind depends in ſome ſort on a portion of "matter?" How can it happen to ſouls that are "united with the Supreme mind immediately, and in a moſt intimate manner, tho' "the diſtance between them be infinite†?"

ORDINARY men may be content to make the moſt of the commerce they find eſtabliſhed in their nature between ſenſe and intellect, to puſh their enquiries about mind as far, and no further than a few general notions which intuitive obſervation will juſtify; and in this proceſs, and in the communication of their intellectual ideas, to avail themſelves of corporeal ideas, and to make the little they know of body ſubſervient to the leſs that they can know of mind. This is enough, no doubt, for vulgar ſouls confined to material habitations, wherein they feel the weight of an heavy atmoſphere, and the malignity of an eaſterly blaſt. But it is not enough for thoſe who are raiſed above the vulgar, metaphyſicians by nature, divines by grace, "all whoſe ideas are to be "found in the efficacious ſubſtance of the divi-"nity††." and into whom "an human ſoul, "and a rational mind, were inſinuated not to be "quickened, not to be bleſſed, not to be illu-"minated, except by the very ſubſtance of

† Recherche de la ver. pref. †† lb. l. iii. p. 2. c. 6.

" God §." Theſe men are more converſant with intelligible than ſenſible beings, with the intellectual world over which they range, than with the material world whoſe exiſtence they deny ſometimes; and therefore it ſhould ſeem that it would have been more eaſy to them to have invented a metaphyſical language, than to have continued the uſe of words already appropriated to ideas as diſtant as thoſe of real beings from the entia rationis, or as thoſe of body from thoſe of ſpirit. It would have been likewiſe of extreme benefit to mankind, whom theſe philoſophers take ſo much generous pains to inſtruct, if they had been able, by the help of ſuch a language, to ſet their ſublime conceptions in a direct and full light, inſtead of that indirect and half light which comes reflected from images foreign to them.

I AM ready, therefore, on this account to lament that the attempt of biſhop WILKINS, to form ſuch a language, miſcarried, and that LEIBNITZ neither finiſhed his alphabet of human thoughts, nor his metaphyſical algebra. It may be ſaid, perhaps, that theſe helps, great as they would be, would be ſuch only for the greateſt genii, and that we have, therefore, a vaſt obligation to theſe philoſophers, who make no longer

§ Inſinuavit nobis Chriſtus animam humanam, et mentem rationalem non vegetari, non beatificari, non illuminari niſi ab ipſa ſubſtantia Dei. Ib. cited from St. AUSTIN, in JOAN, trac. 23.

the

the diſtinction that their predeceſſors made of initiated and profane, but deliver the myſteries of their ſcience in vulgar language, with condeſcenſion to our groſs conceptions, that would never comprehend them if they were kept in their native abſtraction, inſtead of being clothed with ideas that fall under the view of imagination. Juſt ſo, it is ſaid, that the ſacred authors writ agreeably to all the vulgar notions of the ages and countries in which they lived, out of regard to their ignorance, and to the groſs conceptions of the people: as if theſe authors had not writ for all ages and all countries, or as if truth and error were to be followed, like faſhions, where they prevailed. This condeſcenſion, then, is very ill placed, and it would have become much better the great men we ſpeak of, to have raiſed their fellow creatures up, than to have let themſelves down; to have cured us of all our errors, than to have left us in any; and to have abſtracted us, or to have taught us plainly the great ſecret of abſtracting ourſelves in our meditations from all things ſenſible, than to have left us immerſed in them.

But to ſpeak more ſeriouſly and more plainly; the truth is, that if theſe admired maſters of reaſon did not hold the vulgar language, and make up their intellectual ſchemes of corporeal ideas, they would have nothing to ſay more than every man, who contemplates his own mind with attention, may know without their help. They are

ſo far from being confined and clogged by the uſe of the ideas they take from body and apply to mind, that it is by their means alone they extend their range and ſeem to riſe. Obſerve how father MALBRANCHE ſets out in the very firſt ſection of his Reſearch of Truth. He begins by conſidering perception and will. One of theſe is a paſſive, the other an active power of the mind. We know them intuitively, or the ideas we have of them by reflection are perfectly clear and diſtinct; ſo clear and diſtinct, that definitions and explanations of theſe, as of all our ſimple ideas, can only ſerve to perplex the mind, and to render them obſcure. To what purpoſe then did this philoſopher deſcend into a long detail of compariſons between theſe two faculties of the mind, and two of the properties that belong to matter, that of receiving figures, and that of being determined to various motions? It was not neceſſary to explain what needed no explanation; but it was neceſſary to lay, as he did lay with much ingenuity, tho' very precariouſly, ſome of the foundations of this ſyſtem.

THIS is the common practice of metaphyſical writers, and what MALBRANCHE and our BERKELEY have done ſo plauſibly, and ſo agreeably, that they, who are far from admitting the ſyſtems of either, read the writings of both with the utmoſt pleaſure the moſt heavy philoſopher, whoſe name ever ended in us, pretends to feel. Nor ſhall we be much ſurpriſed at their ſucceſs, if we conſider

conſider how the vaſt extravagant poets, ſuch as ARIOSTO for example, who wander continually beyond the bounds of nature, and wherever a lawleſs fancy leads them, ſoften ſometimes the groſſeſt abſurdities under the maſk of figures. Struck by theſe, the mind grows attentive to them, ſtops it's attention there, and rather ſuppoſes an application than examines it.

WHEN amuſement alone is concerned, and not inſtruction, this may be pardonable on both ſides, in the author and in the reader. But in more ſerious ſtudies, where one writes to inſtruct, and the other reads to be inſtructed, it is pardonable in neither. One rule, therefore, ought to be obſerved inviolably, the rule I mean of admitting, or rejecting figures as they are juſtified, or not juſtified, by their application. Their application is their criterion. Metaphyſicians and divines, therefore, who have made figures and compariſons of ſo great conſequence by their uſe of them, ſhould conſider that the principal and moſt proper uſe of them, is like that of varniſh on a picture. As a painter would be thought mad who ſhould varniſh an unpainted canvaſs, ſo muſt they be expoſed to this cenſure, or to one more ſevere, if it appears at any time that they had no clear and determinate ideas in their minds, concerning intellectual ſubjects, and ſpiritual natures and operations, when they employed, under pretence of explaining them, ſo many others borrowed from the objects of ſenſe. When they have

really

really ſuch ideas in their minds, they muſt remember too that figures and compariſons are varniſh ſtill. It muſt not be uſed to alter the intellectual picture, it muſt only ſerve to give a greater luſtre, and to make it better ſeen. Intellectual ideas and notions, in the mind of the philoſopher or divine, ſhould lead them to the invention of figures, and theſe figures ſhould lead the ſcholar to theſe intellectual ideas and notions. When the latter is not ſo led, eaſily and almoſt unavoidably, the figures are improper, or he has a right to conclude that the philoſopher or divine had no ſuch ideas nor notions in his mind. Now the firſt of theſe proceedings is impertinent, and the ſecond is an arrant fraud. Figures in general, theſe of ſpeech, and all others that do not typify determinately, are unworthy of rational creatures, how much more of God? and figures that typify nothing, are nothing, or they are worſe than nothing; they are ſo many lies, ſince they pretend to denote ſomething real, when nothing real exiſts. How the ſight of that brazen ſerpent, which MOSES erected in the deſart, cured the ISRAELITES of the venomous bites of real ſerpents, I know not. Miraculouſly, ſay our divines. Juſt as other images work cures at this day, ſay your divines. Be this as it will, the figure typified very determinately what God intended it ſhould typify, when he ſaid, "pone eum pro ſigno." But when your divines and ours agree to make it a ſign of the Chriſt lifted up on the croſs, and crucified, he muſt be very cabaliſtical indeed who can diſcover the

the ſame determination. Real ſerpents had cauſed a real plague. A brazen ſerpent was the figure that ſignified this event to be over. It ſignified, therefore, at the ſame time, that the ſon of God himſelf was to come into the world near two thouſand years afterwards, to deliver mankind from the allegorical plague of ſin, which he did not moſt certainly cauſe. How reaſonable is one, how abſurd the other application of this figure? How neceſſary is it therefore to examine ſcrupulouſly the application of every figure, that we may not be impoſed on by falſe appearances? But I will conclude theſe reflections by an example taken from figurative ſpeech. It will be thus more cloſe to my purpoſe; and that it may be the ſtronger to ſhew the abuſe of figures, it ſhall be taken from one that has a real, and be contraſted, with one that has an imaginary application.

THE word DISCOURSE is derived from a Latin verb, which ſignifies to run about, and by the motion of our legs, and the agitation of our whole body (for when the word was invented all men believed they had bodies) to traverſe many different grounds, or the ſame ground many different ways. Now the application of this corporeal image to what paſſes in the mind, or to the action of the mind when we meditate on various ſubjects, or on many diſtinct parts of the ſame ſubject, and when we communicate theſe thoughts to one another, ſometimes with greater, and ſometimes with leſs agitation and rapidity, is obvious. It

anſwers

anſwers as nearly as ſuch applications can anſwer, and there is no danger that this figure ſhould communicate a falſe idea, or fail to produce that which it is deſigned to produce. There can be neither equivocation, perplexity, nor diſappointment in the uſe of it.

THE word INSPIRATION is derived, like the other, from a Latin verb which ſignifies to blow in; and it has been ſaid, that "the image might "be borrowed to denote an action of God in an "extraordinary manner influencing, exciting, and "enlightening the mind of a prophet, or apoſtle." How many aſſumptions are here in one ſhort ſentence? and how impoſſible muſt it be to come at any thing on which a reaſonable mind can reſt, whilſt figures are explained by other figures that want explanation as much? Influencing is a vague term, and may be applied ſeveral ways with equal propriety. But exciting and enlightening denote different kinds of action, and neither of them has any relation to inſpiration, or blowing in. Here then is metaphor heaped on metaphor, without any true application to an intellectual idea, and we know as little what is meant by inſpiration as we did before. I conceive inſpiration even leſs than abſtraction. The latter, ſuch as it is repreſented by moſt philoſophers, appears to me impoſſible; but I conceive what the ſuppoſed operation of the mind ſignified by this figurative term is, and by conceiving what is meant, or the application of the term, I conceive the apparent impoſſibility

poſſibility of the thing. But I have no more conception of this ſuppoſed action of the divine on the human mind, than I have of the ſpiration by which the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father and the Son, according to the deciſion of the council of FLORENCE that met to reconcile the Greek and Latin churches in the fifteenth century. The doctors of abſtraction, therefore, require that we ſhould believe againſt knowledge, and thoſe of inſpiration, that we ſhould be implicit without it. Now this would be a great deal too much, even if we did not know the uſe that has been made of the ſuppoſed natural power of abſtraction, and of the ſuppoſed ſupernatural gift of inſpiration. But both are ſufficiently known; and it is a little too late, and but a little, to impoſe either on us in the character of philoſophers. If we ſubmit to be implicit in another character, and in one of the caſes, as far as it is neceſſary to keep us even now within the pale of the Chriſtian church, we ſhall do very prudently. But it will be true, however, that the term of inſpiration is a figure that gives us no intellectual idea, becauſe it is not really the image of any.

THERE was a time, and it laſted long, when this term was employed in a literal ſenſe. I refer to the time when Heatheniſh, Jewiſh, and Chriſtian ſuperſtition prevailed ſeparately firſt, and then unitedly. Ignorance, and fear produced ſuperſtition, and ſuperſtition in it's turn maintained ignorance and fear in the minds of men. Thus ſuperſtition broached the notion of inſpiration,

and

and when the notion was once eſtabliſhed, and the fact believed, ſuppoſed inſpiration ſerved to confirm and authorize ſuperſtition. That which has happened in ſo many other inſtances happened in this, a groundleſs and abſurd opinion, which grew into vogue in dark ages, and was conſecrated by a rude and ignorant people, prevailed in ages more enlightened. Men adopted what they would not have invented, and knowledge ſeemed to increaſe for no other reaſon, or to no other purpoſe, than to defend, to cultivate, and to improve error.

INSPIRATION, which has been ſince aſcribed to a metaphyſical cauſe that metaphyſicians cannot explain, was eſteemed at firſt a phyſical operation that was obvious to the ſenſes. The goats of CORETAS approached a cavern on the hill of PARNASSUS. They fell into ſtrange agitations, and made an unuſual noiſe. The ſhepherd followed them, and as ſoon as he came near enough to receive the influence of the ſubterranean inſpiring blaſt, he began to be agitated like his goats, and to prophecy like them; for we may believe, as reaſonably as any part of the ſtory, that the only difference conſiſted in this, his language was underſtood, that of his goats was not. On this experience was the Temple built, and the famous oracle eſtabliſhed at DELPHI, "commune humani generis oraculum," as LIVY calls it. The PYTHIAN prieſteſs ſat on a tripod, leſt ſhe ſhould fall into the cavern when her head began

began to turn, and from thence ſhe uttered with prophetic fury the inſpirations ſhe received, not from above, but from below. Many other examples might be brought of ſuch phyſical inſpirations, but this one is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe; at leaſt it will be fully ſo when I have added, that they maintained their credit ſo well, and ſo long, even among philoſophers, that TULLY introduces his brother, who was a zealous Stoician, as a perſon entirely convinced of their reality. So convinced he appears, that when an objection, taken from the diſrepute into which this oracle began to fall, is oppoſed to the argument he had drawn from its univerſal reputation, QUINTUS thinks it ſufficient to anſwer on this phyſical principle, that the inſpiring virtue of the earth which uſed to excite and enlighten the mind of the Pythoneſs, might be worn out by age, as rivers have been ſeen to dry up, or to change their courſe *.

BUT this was not the ſole, tho' it might be the firſt notion of a divine inſpiration. HESIOD, and your HOMER, and others more ancient than either, had filled the world with daemons and genii: and as poets were the philoſophers of thoſe ages among the Greeks, the machinery of poetry came ſoon to be that of philoſophy. PLATO, as great a poet as any of them in the garb of a philoſopher, multiplied vaſtly theſe imaginary beings, and aſ-

* —Poteſt vis illa terrae quae mentem PYTHIAE divino afflatu concitabat evanuiſſe vetuſtate, ut quoſdam evanuiſſe amnes aut in alium curſum contortos & deflexos videmus. De Divin. l. 1.

ſigned

ſigned them different ranks and different employments. He made the ſyſtem of an intellectual world, and, in the reſpect I am going to mention, as abſurdly as many others, but more reverentially toward the Supreme Being. He ſuppoſed a chain of intermediate beings from man up to God; and it is evident that theſe beings were in his ſyſtem the agents of the Supreme Being, both in the creation and government of the world. He did not raiſe up man to an immediate communication with God. The diſtance and the diſproportion ſeemed to him too great. He ſuppoſed him influenced, that is excited and reſtrained, enlightened and inſpired, as well as made, by other created beings, by whom this diſtance was nearly at leaſt filled up, and this diſproportion gradually leſſened. In his ſyſtem, therefore, a greater reverence was ſhewn to the Supreme Being than in thoſe of ſome other theologians, in which God confers familiarly with men, and acts a part, not only in the moſt important, but in the moſt trifling ſcenes of our human farce. But ſtill the abſurdity remained of ſuch a gradation of beings. That there is a gradation, I doubt not, upwards, as our ſenſes inform us that there is one downwards. But ſuch a gradation, by which finite approaches nearer and nearer to infinite, is inconceivable. The diſtance and diſproportion will be ſtill infinite.

But to return, and to conclude what I ſhall ſay about the notions that obtained among the heathens

heathens on this ſubject; for you know that I have reſerved to myſelf a right of following the matter as it riſes before me, without obſerving in theſe eſſays, any more than I uſed to do in our converſation, a juſt proportion in the members of my diſcourſe. The cauſes of inſpiration then were principally theſe: an intoxicating wind or vapor that blew into the inſpired perſons; or the action of demons, or genii, on their bodies, or in them. Such beings were believed univerſally to exiſt; for even DEMOCRITUS, if I miſtake not, is ſaid to have admitted them. But they were believed to be material, tho' ſpiritual and inviſible; and whether PLATO thought them all good and beneficient, or no, the general opinion, and that even of the latter Platonicians, held that ſome were good, and ſome bad; that there were pure and impure ſpirits. Their cotemporaries, the Chriſtian fathers, affirmed that theſe ſpirits were all of the latter ſort. They attributed the whole ſecret of oracles rather to the malice of the devil, than to the knavery of the prieſts. I have read in BASNAGE *, I think, that ORIGEN and CHRYSOSTOM repreſented the prieſteſs ſitting on a tripod over the ſacred vent, with her legs wide open, to receive the ſpirit; and that ſome pretended the oracles were delivered through this honorable channel. Nay, that judicious perſon, the martyr JUSTIN, ſcrupled not to aſſure the world, that theſe devils had carnal enjoyment of girls, and boys too, in the very act of inſpiration. The ge-

* Antiq. judaiques.

neral effect of inſpiration was madneſs and fury. Divine madneſs and divine fury they were called: and the perſons, thus inſpired, uttered their vaticinations in fits that made their bodies ſwell, and become diſtorted by convulſive motions. In this ſtate, and when they were quite out of their ſenſes, they were conſulted by men who thought themſelves in theirs, who were often the greateſt, and in public opinion the wiſeſt, of mankind. TULLY† aſks on what authority we are to believe that the madman ſees what the wiſeman does not ſee, and that he who loſes human ſenſe acquires divine? His brother might have referred him, for an anſwer, to the works of his admired philoſopher, to that paſſage in the Phædrus particularly, where PLATO recommends ſo highly that divine fury which exerts itſelf in vaticination, myſtery, poetry, and love; and where he gives the preference over all other wiſdom to that which divine fury infuſes.

Now nothing could reſemble more a heathen, than a jewiſh vaticination; and no wonder is there that it ſhould be ſo. Egypt and the eaſt were the great ſchools of ſuch philoſophy and theology as I have mentioned. They abounded with ſeers of viſions and dreamers of dreams, with prophets and diviners, with wizards and cunning men, with theurgic as well as natural magic, and all

† Quid vero habet auctoritatis furor iſte, quem divinum vocatis, ut quae ſapiens non videat, ea videat inſanus, et is, qui humanos ſenſus amiſerit, divinos aſſecutus ſit? De div. Lib. ii.

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the occult ſciences. The Greeks borrowed from hence almoſt all the knowledge, real and imaginary, that they had; and ſo did the Jews too, as ſome divines have had the candor to confeſs, whilſt the crowd of them affect to maintain the contrary againſt irreſiſtible probability, and would perſuade us that the whole heathen world was enlightened by the lamp of the tabernacle: as if any ſimilitude of opinions, cuſtoms, and rites, which is a good proof in general that the more modern learned of the more ancient nation, was equally good to prove that the more ancient learned of the more modern, the maſters of the ſlaves, and a people, that had an high opinion of themſelves, of a people whom they deſpiſed. But however this may have been, the Jews, according to the ſpirit of the moſaic ſyſtem, made the Supreme Being more frequently an immediate actor in matters of inſpiration, as in all other matters, than the heathen did; tho' they too employed the miniſtry of angels, whoſe names at leaſt, they learned firſt from the Chaldeans, if they did not come firſt acquainted with theſe ſpiritual beings among that people in their captivity.

THIS notion of an immediate action of God on the human mind became more common, and inſpiration more metaphyſical, in the Chriſtian ſchools. Some of the heathen philoſophers held opinions that led to this, and might have been improved ſo as to derive all inſpiration immediately from the Supreme Being in ſome extraordi-

nary manner or other; which they would not have been at a loſs to repreſent, or rather to evade the neceſſity of repreſenting, by the help of figurative ſtyle. Some of them aſſumed that the human ſoul was drawn out of the divine nature, or was tinctured by it, or had catched it's fire from it. I know not how to expreſs better thoſe ſtrange words, ſtrange I mean in this application, hauſti and delibati. They aſſumed further, that the divine mind pervaded and filled all things: and when they aſſumed thus much, it ſeemed eaſy to conclude, from this near relation of the divine and human mind, to an action of the former on the latter, "cognatione divinorum animorum animos humanos commoveri*."

PLATO's trinity, as little intelligible as it was, might have been another aſſumption, by which to account more particularly for this divine act of inſpiration. The ſecond perſon, God's intelligence, the Word, made men: and what could be more conſequential, than to aſcribe all particular inſpirations to the third perſon, that univerſal ſpirit, that energy of God, which animates and governs the whole? No part of this could have ſhocked the opinions of thoſe philoſophical theiſts, who acknowledged not only a general providence, but particular providences. As little could it have been thought repugnant to that principle which ſeemed common to them all, that principle of reverence to the one, the father

* TULLY De div.

of

of gods and men, whom they conceived to be beyond and before all exiſtence. They could conceive no being, nor manner of being, equal to the Supreme; but neither did the platonic trinity ſuppoſe that there was any ſuch: and they might have placed the ſource of inſpiration, according to this theology, much higher, than obvious, viſible cauſes, and even than the ſuggeſtions of demons and genii, without aſcribing it to the firſt mind, or admitting any mind equal to the firſt. They had the more reaſon to do this, and to place inſpiration, as it were, out of ſight, when the credit of oracles began to fail, and a groſs phyſical account of it would paſs no longer.

But that which heathen theologers could do, Chriſtian theologers could not, after the Nicean council at leaſt, whatever they did, or might have done, before it. They aſcribed inſpiration, indeed, to the Holy Ghoſt: but, the three perſons of this trinity making one God only, they aſcribed inſpiration to an immediate act of the Supreme Being, as the Jews had done before them; among whom this act, and the immediate preſence of the Deity, were ſaid to be manifeſted often in a ſenſible manner. Something of this kind obtained at firſt among the Chriſtians. Voices from heaven for inſtance, and the viſible deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, would have made inſpiration, if theſe phænomena had continued, as much an object of ſenſe in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, as it had been ever in that of the Jews or of the heathen. But theſe

phænomena did not continue: and tho' ſigns and wonders were ſaid to be wrought by perſons inſpired, inſpiration became inviſible, and the notion of it purely metaphyſical: leſs abſurd than former notions perhaps, but more remote too from human comprehenſion.

THE conſequence of all this was, that the proof of inſpiration reſting on authority and opinion, it became very equivocal. Every ſect and every council pretended to it: and, whilſt they oppoſed and damned one another, what one ſide attributed to inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, the other attributed to ſuggeſtions of the devil: for in this ſyſtem the Holy Ghoſt, that is God himſelf, is the inſpirer and comforter; and the devil, an inferior, a created ſpirit, and yet a rival to the father of all ſpirits, is the tempter and tormentor. How God acts on the human mind to inſpire and comfort, and the devil to tempt, was then, and is ſtill, a metaphyſical or theological ſecret. But the power of tormenting, which the devil exerciſed in thoſe days, was no ſecret at all. Legions of impure ſpirits were believed to take often poſſeſſion of the body of men, from whence nothing could drive them but aſperſions of holy water, and other forms of eccleſiaſtical conjuration, performed by prieſts, that is, by men on whom the impoſition of hands had conferred the Holy Ghoſt in a conſtant ſucceſſion from the apoſtles. This conjuration had been firſt taught by SOLOMON, as JOSEPHUS aſſerts in the eighth book of his Antiquities;

quities; and it continued long in credit, for much the ſame reaſons that oracles and the arts of divination had done ſo formerly. It is kept in ſome uſe ſtill by the Roman clergy: and our reformed clergy would not be ſorry perhaps to revive this pious practice.

WHILST ignorance and ſuperſtition reigned triumphantly, and the phantaſtical ideas and notions which they communicate, and which authority, education, and habit do in ſome ſort realiſe in the mind, ſpread and prevailed; men might be eaſily perſuaded that the ſpirit or breath of God, which blew into the face of the firſt of men, and made him a living creature*, might blow likewiſe on extraordinary occaſions, and in an extraordinary manner, into the faces of ſome of his poſterity, as into choſen veſſels. They might be eaſily perſuaded that this breath was not only a principle of life to all, but an influencing, exciting, and enlightening principle to ſome. They might imagine, without any great effort, that the effect of this occaſional breath was to fan into a flame the latent ſparks of a certain fire, that had been kindled in the original conſtitution of man, and had been extinguiſhed by the fall. They might imagine that they knew really what all this meant: and on ſuch reaſonings, which would have been none of the worſt they employed, they might have proved to themſelves and others the inſpira-

* Inſpiravit in faciem ejus ſpiraculum vitae, et factus eſt homo in animam vivèntum, are the words of MOSES.

tion of Chriſtian ſaints, to whom ſublime myſterious truths were revealed, and of Jewiſh prophets and ſeers, who foretold future events, and recovered ſtolen goods: for even this, as low as it may ſeem, was a part of their employment, and one effect of their inſpiration.

But this reign is well nigh over; or, if it continues in ſome of theſe parts of the world, it triumphs univerſally in none. He who pretends to inſtruct now muſt know firſt, and expect, if he uſes any figure, to be called upon to explain his meaning; that is, to ſhew this meaning without the veil of any figure. Inſpiration was long underſtood in the literal ſenſe of the word, not only whilſt men imagined groſsly that it was the effect of a ſubterranean wind or vapor, but when they had ſpiritualized it a little, and fancied it a breath that came from above, or a ſpirit that deſcended on one prophet, and paſſed from one to another with ſenſible effects. Since it could be received no longer in the literal ſenſe, philoſophers and divines have given up the literal ſenſe, and kept the word, that ſignified ſomething, to ſerve as a figure that ſignifies nothing, and that can be tranſlated into nothing but ſome other figure. Figures and types are indeed the ſtrongeſt entrenchments of metaphyſics and theology: and it is in them that the profeſſors of theſe reputed ſciences defend themſelves the beſt.

An hiſtory of inſpiration, like one of divination, would

would be a collection of ſuch extravagancies and abſurdities, as might be ſufficient to make our ſpecies forfeit the character of reaſonable creatures, if it did not ſhew at the ſame time that by a free uſe of their reaſon men have detected, one after another, moſt of the fallacies, the groſſeſt at leaſt, that had been impoſed on them by heathens, Jews, and Chriſtians: for even of theſe it cannot be denied. The fautors of inſpiration are thus reduced to their laſt entrenchment; and, having abandoned all their other poſts as untenable, they endeavour to defend this by not explaining what has been refuted as often as any explanation of it has been attempted. Your friend ATTERBURY, who knew more of claſſical learning, and even of divinity, than he did of politics, tho' he affected theſe the moſt, has ſometimes lamented that any explanations of the real preſence in the euchariſty had been given, and that the church had made any deciſions about it. As long as it was held an inexplicable myſtery, it was believed, he ſaid; but as ſoon as divines had been ſo unſkilful as to attempt to explain it, BERENGER's recantation ſignified nothing: and it has been a diſputed point ever ſince. If this be a right notion, as I incline to think it is, theſe two myſteries, that of the real preſence, and that of inſpiration, have had very different fates. The firſt ſet out a myſtery, and was piouſly believed, till attempts to explain it ſhewed that it implied contradiction. The other ſet out as a natural phænomenon, and was ſo far from being thought a real myſtery, how much

much ſoever it might remain ſuch to the vulgar, that prophecy and divination, the effects of it, were thought attainable by purifications, purgations, and other phyſical methods, and that they became arts which were taught in the ſchools of the Heathens and the colleges of the Jews. But the notion of inſpiration has ended in myſtery, where the other began: and this expedient, the only one that can ſupport it at all, would ſupport it effectually, if theſe ages reſembled a little better thoſe wherein the belief of the real preſence was firſt eſtabliſhed.

It may be ſaid that an extraordinary action of God on the human mind, which the word inſpiration is now uſed to denote, is not more inconceivable, than the ordinary action of mind on body, and of body on mind: and I confeſs that it is not. But yet the caſes are ſo widely different, that no argument can be drawn from one in favor of the other. It is impoſſible to doubt of an action which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and whereof we are conſcious every moment; and it is impertinent to deny the exiſtence of any phænomenon merely becauſe we cannot account for it: but then this phænomenon muſt be apparent, and the proof that it exiſts, or has exiſted, muſt be ſuch as no reaſonable man can refuſe to admit; otherwiſe we ſhall be expoſed to make frequently the ridiculous figure that philoſophers have ſometimes made, when it has been diſcovered, after they had reaſoned long about a thing,

thing, that there was no ſuch thing. We muſt not aſſume for truth, what can be proved neither à priori, nor à poſteriori. A myſtery cannot be proved à priori; it would be no myſtery if it could: and inſpiration is become a myſtery, ſince all we know of it is, that it is an inexplicable action of the divine on the human mind. It would be ſilly, therefore, to aſſume it to be true, becauſe God can act myſteriouſly, that is, in ways unknown to us, on his creature man: for juſt ſo, ASGYLL did prove, or might have proved, that men do not die, but are tranſlated, becauſe God can tranſlate them. There is then no poſſibility of proving inſpiration à priori; and the proofs, that are brought à poſteriori for Chriſtian inſpiration, are not more deciſive to Chriſtians, than thoſe, which the Stoicians brought in favor of vaticination and divination, were to them; nor than thoſe, which the Mahometans and the worſhippers of FOE bring of the ſame kind, are to them.

THIS word inſpiration, about which I have ſaid ſo much more than I intended, belongs properly to you ſons of APOLLO: and to you it ſhould be of right reſtored. Whilſt you were at once poets, prophets, philoſophers, and divines, and went about from houſe to houſe ſinging, as the methodiſts do preaching, ſublime doctrines, the uſe of it might be a little confuſed: and what you aſſumed in the two firſt characters, you might aſcribe to yourſelves and others in the two laſt. But ſince they are become diſtinct profeſſions, as well

well as characters, and one of them, that of prophets, is extinct, inſpiration may have it's place and uſe in poetry; but no where elſe. If philoſophers and divines employ this word, which ſignifies a particular and determinate action, as a figure to ſignify ſome other action, they employ it improperly. It cannot ſerve to inform; but it may ſerve, and it actually does ſerve, to deceive. Our quakers, our methodiſts, and enthuſiaſts of every ſort and in every religion, are confirmed, by the received uſe of this word, in the belief that the Spirit of God deſcends upon them, is inſpired into them, excites and enlightens their minds, and enables them by it's powerful operation to utter all the extravagancies, which are in their opinion ſo many divine truths.

It is the more reaſonable to guard againſt every thing of this kind, becauſe the hypotheſis of ſome of our fineſt modern writers on the ſubject of the human mind, tho' they do not pretend directly to be inſpired, ſeem to renew and improve the reveries, or waking dreams, of ancient philoſophers, in ſuch a manner as to lay again the foundations of ſuperſtition, by ſuppoſing an immediate and conſtant communication between the divine and the human natures. That Malbranche ſuppoſed ſuch a communication, is evident in all his writings: and his Chriſtian and metaphyſical meditations are nothing leſs than a dialogue between the Word and him. The conference was not held indeed in the terms and form

of

of the dialogue; but the language he makes the Word to hold in it, he affirms to be conformable to the anſwers which he thinks he received when he interrogated the Word on the ſame ſubjects.

I HAVE ſometimes wondered that divines and metaphyſicians, who have borrowed ſo many phantaſtical notions from PLATO, have neglected one, which they might have found in the Apology of SOCRATES, and by which they might have accounted more probably, and more decently, than they have done, for divine inſpirations, revelations, and communications. They might have learned there to diſtinguiſh between the ethereal and elementary body. We may compare the firſt to a ſhirt, ſince the ſame PLATO compares the ſecond in the Phaedrus to a ſuit of clothes, and ſince it is worn under the other, "ſub manifeſto hoc corpore latens." Now it was by this medium that SOCRATES was inſpired by his demon, or guardian angel. He ſaw viſions, and he heard voices: but how? Not by his elementary, but by his ethereal, ſenſes. Thus an inferior ſpirit, and not the Supreme Being, is the immediate actor; and inſpiration is no longer an unmeaning figure of ſpeech. But this is not enough for metaphyſical divines. Our notions of humanity muſt be raiſed higher, even at the expence of debaſing (for as ſuch it appears to me) our notions of the divinity. God and man muſt be more intimately joined; tho' by endeavouring ſo to join them, they renew, in ſome ſort, the groſſeſt abſurdities of paganiſm.

MANY

MANY inſtances might be produced of this ſort, and ſome very flagrant. I will content myſelf in this place with the mention of one. BAYLE obſerves that the notion of ſeeing all things in the Infinite Being, which father MALBRANCHE advanced on this aſſumption, that our ideas muſt be in God, beeauſe they cannot be modifications of any created mind, differs little from the doctrine of DEMOCRITUS *, who taught, that the images of objects, which preſent themſelves to our ſenſes, are emanations of God, nay, that they are God, and that the idea in our minds is God likewiſe. The obſervation is certainly juſt; and I need not enlarge upon it to ſhew you that it is ſo. Inſtead of that, I will aſk you whether the different hypotheſis of a philoſopher, whom you and I love and honor, has not ſome, tho' a more remote, reſemblance to the ſame doctrine? Both of them at leaſt have, in my opinion, one common tendency, that which I have juſt now mentioned. If I was perfectly perſuaded, as I am very much of the contrary, that we perceive all our ideas in the divine mind, I could account for all that is attributed to inſpiration by a figure,

* The words of TULLY are theſe: "DEMOCRITUS, qui "tum imagines earumque circuitus in deorum numero refert: "tum illam naturam quae imagines fundat ac mittat: tum "ſcientiam intelligentiamque." They will be better tranſlated thus. DEMOCRITUS, who places among the gods not only the images of the objects that ſurround and ſtrike us, but that nature which pours forth and ſends theſe images to us; and knowledge and intelligence. COTTA mentions the ſame notions afterwards, not in the ſame words as VELLEIUS, but to the ſame effect. TULLY De nat. deor. lib. i.

that

that would have a ſort of metaphyſical meaning. I could repreſent the ſoul as a mirror; and it has been ſo repreſented, I think, by ſome: and then ſuppoſe that images, received from the preſence of God to it, are reflected by it, which would be like the reflected light of the ſun; a ſecondary and fainter, but a divine, illumination. Again, could I comprehend that viſual language, in which "the author of nature conſtantly ſpeaks "to the eyes of all mankind;" I might be able perhaps to comprehend how God may ſpeak to prophets and apoſtles in viſions, or elſe I might deduce by analogy, that as we think we ſee when we do not really ſee, but only receive ideas through the eye from an immediate action of God; ſo prophets and apoſtles might think that they employed the faculties of their own excited and illuminated minds, and ſignified their own thoughts by the words they pronounced, when they neither thought nor ſpoke, but when the breath of God articulated in their organs. I might be able to comprehend ſuch ſublime notions; and I ſhould be glad, no doubt, to find how happily theſe doctrines coincide with that ancient opinion, that prophets propheſied often without knowing that they did ſo. But I confeſs that I comprehend as little our friend's hypotheſis, as I do that of the father of the oratory; tho' I comprehend very clearly how we may be ſaid in ſome ſort, and in ſome particular caſes, to learn to ſee; that is, by the ordinary courſe of experience, and not by any divine agency.

SHALL

SHALL I own it? I cannot be mortified at my want of comprehenſion in this caſe. When philoſophers employ clear and determinate ideas, ſuch as are real, not phantaſtic, and when they reaſon on principles that are evidently true, inſtead of ſuch as are doubtful at beſt, I comprehend them without any extreme labor of mind. When they do otherwiſe, I miſpend no time in making unprofitable efforts to comprehend them. COTTA treats the notions of DEMOCRITUS that have been mentioned with the utmoſt contempt, and even VELLEIUS had entered into no refutation of them. BAYLE thinks a little genius could never form them, and that in order to form them a man muſt comprehend the whole extent of power, which belongs to a nature capable of painting in our minds the images of objects. I will imitate in all ſimilar caſes the old academician, not the modern ſceptic, who ſeems a dogmatiſt on this occaſion. I will follow no man out of the high road of plain common ſenſe. In that, the philoſopher may lead me to all real knowledge: for common ſenſe does not exclude uncommon diſcoveries in the ſearch of truth. But the philoſopher goes often out of this road, whilſt the illiterate, unthinking crowd of mankind cannot go far in it. Theſe are the two extremes in which men ſometimes meet. The difference conſiſts always in their acquiſitions and habits, and not always in their natural faculties, The reaſon of one is not cultivated like that of the other; but the imaginations of both may be apt to warm and

tranſport

tranſport them alike. Whilſt the philoſopher conſults his reaſon alone, he will be always far before the other. But if his imagination carries him away, there is a chance that they may meet: and the philoſopher with all his knowledge, and all his reaſon, may have not his own whimſies alone, but thoſe of the moſt vulgar underſtandings, to ſupport.

SECT. VI.

HAVING dwelt thus long on one art of the mind that degenerates into artifice, it is time I ſhould proceed to another: and the art to be conſidered next, is that which was intended when I ſaid that we are ſometimes obliged to pay in counters for want of ready money. What I mean by it is this. We are ſometimes obliged, in philoſophical, as well as in common diſcourſe, to make uſe of words that have no determinate, nor indeed, properly, any, ideas or notions at all annexed to them. I ſay, we are obliged to do ſo, in order to diſtinguiſh this caſe from that of metaphyſics and theology, which are almoſt wholly converſant, when they keep within their own bounds and go neither into phyſics nor ethics, about words that have no intelligible meaning, words that have been invented to conceal ignorance, and to create an appearance of ſcience: whereas the words intended here, tho' they have no ideas nor notions, properly ſpeaking, annexed to them, have however a meaning and an uſe, an intelligible meaning and a good uſe.

Two of them I will produce as examples, and they ſhall be words that ſerve to denote unknown cauſes of known effects. They take their preciſion, like the names of ſubſtances, from ſenſible effects, and they refer either to an unknown real cauſe, or to the unknown principle of ſome apparent cauſe.

Our ignorance of cauſes, our curioſity, and the extravagant opinions of philoſophers about them, are equally great. I ſhall not enter on that ſubject, here at leaſt. Something, however, muſt be ſaid about the notion of cauſe, in order to ſhew the reaſon, and even neceſſity, of employing ſuch words as I have mentioned; and to introduce what I propoſe to ſay concerning the uſe and abuſe of them. Neglecting, therefore, all the abſtract notions that are entertained about cauſe, the nice and trifling diſtinctions between the cauſe and the ſufficient reaſon of any thing, and the other diſtinctions, as well as diviſions, and ſubdiviſions, that have been made, and that ſerve, for the moſt part, to no other purpoſe than to perplex us in a labyrinth of words, let us content ourſelves to underſtand, when we ſpeak of cauſe in general, "That, by the immediate, or "remote, the phyſical, or moral, virtue whereof "any thing is what it is, or any thing is done "as it is done."

The Supreme Being is the firſt, and, ſtrictly, the ſole efficient cauſe. But as we know nothing of his manner of being, ſo we know nothing of his manner of cauſing. In your Homer's machinery

chinery the gods are perpetually actors; but the poet neither employs them ſo much, nor more improperly, nor more unworthily, than philoſophers and divines have preſumed to employ the Deity. Let us think with greater reverence of God: and whilſt we acknowledge him to be the firſt, let us not imagine him to be the immediate cauſe of every phænomenon and every thing that happens. Through how many mediums, if I may ſay ſo, may not the rays of divine efficacy paſs before they arrive at us! Far be it from me to neglect or to diſcourage the contemplation of the firſt efficient cauſe, who ſhines ſo glorioufly in all his works. But let us adore him in the contemplation of his works, and of the order of ſecond cauſes, by which the ſyſtem of them is maintained, and carried on. Second cauſes cannot be reckoned in a ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe efficient, when they are conſidered relatively to the whole extent of being, at the head of which is God. But as they have a communicated efficiency in ſuch degrees, of ſuch kinds, and under ſuch directions, as it is communicated to them by infinite wiſdom and power, they appear efficient when they are conſidered relatively to us, and to our ſyſtem: and ſince all our knowledge is in truth relative to theſe, we may be well content to admit ideas that are ſo too, and that reach no further. Theſe are our limits: and where our experimental knowledge of ſecond cauſes ſtops, there our phyſical enquiries ſhould ſtop. All beyond is metaphyſical jargon: for at what

point ſoever we leave phyſics, for metaphyſics, we fall of courſe into jargon. The ancients generally ſet out in it. The moderns too often conclude in it.

The firſt example I ſhall produce of words that ſerve to denote unknown cauſes of known effects, ſhall be the word chance. Every event that happens in the courſe of human affairs, how contingent ſoever it may ſeem, has a real and peculiar cauſe. But when theſe cauſes are too remote, or too complicated, to be eaſily, or at all, diſcerned by us, we call the event contingent, and the cauſe chance. Thus we endeavour to ſupply our want of ideas, to think with leſs confuſion, to diſcourſe more intelligibly, and to make up the ſum with counters which we cannot make up with money. But in this kind of payment there has been much abuſe, and much deceit. Superſtition attempted to make theſe counters paſs for real money; and, inſtead of keeping the word chance to ſignify in it's application nothing more than this, that the cauſe of an event was unknown, to make it paſs for an actual cauſe and a poſitive Being. Superſtition imperſonated it under the name of fortune: and this chimerical divinity was ſuppoſed to direct arbitrarily all the events whoſe cauſes were not apparent, or which exceeded in good or ill the expectations of men. The heathens accounted by it for paſt events, conſulted it about future, and referred themſelves to it in doubtful caſes.

It is ſtrange that ſuch ſuperſtitions, inſtead of being confined to the heathen world, ſhould have been as prevalent among God's choſen people, both Jews and Chriſtians, and ſhould be ſcarce exploded at this hour. It is ſtranger ſtill, that a recourſe to the deciſion of chance ſhould be expreſsly commanded in the Old Teſtament, and occaſionally countenanced in the New, even on ſo important an occaſion as the election of an apoſtle in the place of JUDAS ISCARIOT. Yet ſo it is: and from hence we may believe it happened that ſome even of the moſt puerile and abſurd appeals to chance, if one can be more ſo than another, were long preſerved among Chriſtians, and by them applied moſt profanely and cruelly. Many different ſortes or chances were conſulted by the Heathen. Thoſe of Praeneſte, where FORTUNE had a temple adorned with moſaic work by SYLLA, who truſted much to the goddeſs, and took the name of FELIX, on account of his ſucceſs which he aſcribed to her, were extremely famous. I do not remember how theſe conſultations were made; but thoſe that had the names of Sortes Homericae, and Sortes Virgilianae, were made by dipping at random on ſome paſſage in the poems of HOMER and VIRGIL; and the ſuperſtition was ſure to be confirmed whenever, as it could not but happen often, future events ſeemed in any degree to have been figured in theſe paſſages. An odd inſtance of this, which is preſerved in a tradition, derived, I think, from Mr. COWLEY, I may mention as I go along. This poet, and ſome other perſons attached

to CHARLES the firſt, were with him in the iſle of Wight, where CROMWELL kept him in priſon till he brought him to the block. Their amuſement, for it could be nothing more, was to try the Sortes Virgilianae; and in trying them it is reported that the unfortunate prince dipped on thoſe terrible imprecations that DIDO makes againſt AENEAS and his poſterity, in the fourth book of the Eneid.

I SAID that theſe ſuperſtitious uſages have been applied profanely and cruelly by Chriſtians: and I was in the right to ſay ſo. What could be more profane than the practice of opening the ſacred books, in order to take from the firſt paſſage that occurred a prognoſtic of events, and to degrade them to the ſame ſilly uſe that the heathens made of their poems? What could be more cruel than the cuſtom of deciding cauſes criminal, and civil too, by duels; which was introduced by the barbarous northern nations; and was, notwithſtanding the declarations of ſome popes againſt it, ſo far approved by the church, that it was followed on many occaſions in eccleſiaſtical controverſies, and that it was accompanied on all occaſions with much eccleſiaſtical ceremony, even ſo far, that a prieſt bleſſed in the field the weapons of the champions? This trial, like that of paſſing blindfold over red-hot ploughſhares, and others, were appeals to chance, as to a judge: and both theſe appeals, and the conſultations of chance about future events, were founded on a theological axiom, invented to excuſe

cuſe them on one hand, and to create more reverence for them on the other, that God preſides over chance, and directs it by interpoſitions of his providence; ſo that to interrogate chance was to interrogate God; and the deciſions of chance were the deciſions of God.

To apply the word chance in this manner, was abſurd enough. But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe philoſophers who aſcribed the creation of the world to chance? Superſtition perverted this innocent art of the mind: and a word, that ſignified no determinate cauſe at all, was made to ſignify a ſuperior Being, who governs the affairs of the world, and to whoſe agency thoſe events were to be aſcribed that could not be accounted for otherwiſe. Philoſophy, the philoſophy of men who affected to put ſuperſtition under their feet, and to account by phyſical reſearches for all the phænomena, attributed the original of all things to chance. By this proceeding the Epicureans did not endeavour to ſcreen their ignorance, but they pretended to ſhew their knowledge of cauſes. They erected chance into a firſt phyſical cauſe, and derived the production of the univerſe from it. They aſſumed a chaos of innumerable heterogeneous particles, endowed with eſſential activity, and with whatever elſe was neceſſary for their purpoſe, like the declination of theſe atoms: after which they concluded that ſuch a number of entities in perpetual motion and action one on another, muſt paſs ſooner or later through all

poſſible combinations. From hence they concluded again, that the formation of the world was cauſed by a certain concourſe, or combination of atoms, without the unneceſſary help of a directing mind; and that, this concourſe being fortuitous, the world was made by chance. But enough has been ſaid of the uſe and abuſe of this word. It is time to ſpeak of thoſe that have been made of the word force.

Since even Alciphron, the minute philoſopher, could frame no preciſe idea of force, tho' he "ſhut his eyes to aſſiſt his meditation," it might well be aſked, how it comes to paſs that there are ſo many refined ſubtilties and nice diſtinctions about this ſame force? Ingenious and learned men might have employed their time much better moſt certainly, than they have done about "ſubtil "abſtracts, ſpiritual quinteſſences, un certo che "and un non ſo che." I am ſorry to have this proof the more of the folly and affectation of philoſophers. But I am not at all at a loſs to account for them, nor to ſhew from whence the difference ariſes between theſe viſionaries, and thoſe great men who have diſcourſed rationally about force. The difference ariſes plainly from hence: The former have abuſed this art of the mind, and ſuppoſed, or reaſoned as if they ſuppoſed, that this word ſignified what common ſenſe never meaned to ſignify by it. The others have not turned art into artifice in this manner; but have reaſoned about force as about the unknown cauſe of ſenſible

ſible effects, or the unknown cauſality of apparent cauſes. It may ſeem ſtrange perhaps to our firſt thoughts, that men ſhould talk ſenſe, for it will never ſeem ſtrange that they ſhould talk nonſenſe, about ſomething whereof they have no ideas. But the reaſon why they do ſo in the inſtance before us, will appear to our ſecond thoughts extremely plain. That it may appear ſo the more, and that we may ſhew the better how induſtrious the mind is to help it's natural infirmities by art, in the conceptions and expreſſions of things, let me add a few reflections to what has been already obſerved.

WITHOUT meaning what thoſe philoſophers meaned, who ſcreened ſo much ignorance behind the notions they endeavoured to eſtabliſh of occult qualities and occult cauſes, we may ſay that the cauſality of apparent cauſes, and therefore the firſt efficient cauſes in the order of ſecond cauſes, will be always occult, whatever hypotheſis or ſyſtem we follow. The peripatetics and ſchoolmen imagined the qualities of ſubſtances, as they were and are ſtill called, and which are ſuppoſed to excite ideas immediately by their immediate action on our organs, and mediately by their action on other bodies, to be real entities derived from ſubſtantial forms, inherent in ſubſtances ſome how or other; but diſtinct from them, and added to them. Modern philoſophers, more intelligibly and more conformably to experience, have baniſhed all theſe notions of qualities diſtinct from body,

body, and have taught us that the action of body on body is produced, excluſively of them, by the inward conſtitution of body itſelf, and is varied according to the divers conſtitutions of the bodies that are at any time paſſive, and the different ſtates they are in. This opinion leads us on to obſerve the mechaniſm of body, the laws of motion, and whatever elſe makes any part of phyſical enquiry. The other is founded in abſtract general notions, which the knowledge of particulars had little ſhare in framing, and points up to the chimeras of imagination. But ſtill, even the beſt of them ſtops ſhort of the real eſſences of ſubſtances, ſhews us more cauſes, but ſhews us as little the principles of their cauſality.

ALTHO' the ſyſtem of philoſophy be in this reſpect totally changed, yet the mind has found it convenient to preſerve the notion of ſenſible qualities. They were thought real, and referred to ſubſtances as inherent ſpecifically in them. They are conceived now to be qualities by imputation only, and refer to the manner in which our ſenſes are affected. We cannot ſay with ſtrict propriety, this clock has ſeveral ſenſible qualities, tho' it marks the days of the month to our ſight alone, and the hours and the minutes to our eyes and to our ears. We know that there are no ſuch diſtinct qualities in the clock, and that all theſe effects are produced by one ſpring, governed and producing effects according to it's own temper, according to laws and directions reſulting from the

ſtructure

ſtructure of the whole machine, and according to the texture and ſtate of the organs of thoſe to whom it is viſible, or audible. Juſt ſo we cannot ſay with ſtrict propriety, that ſnow is cold by a cold quality, any more than white by a white quality; or that fire is hot by a hot quality. They excite ideas that we diſtinguiſh and mark by theſe words; but they contain nothing in them that reſembles theſe ideas. By the perceptions we have of theſe ideas, we mark, under the name of qualities, the divers effects of the unknown eſſences of ſubſtances.

This modern expedient (for the mind invents expedients as faſt as it finds the want of them in the improvement, or more eaſy improvement of knowledge) is the more reaſonably employed on another account. Tho' there are no ſuch diſtinct ſpecific qualities in bodies as were aſſumed by philoſophers, yet the particles which compoſe bodies are often heterogeneous, as they appear by ſure experiments; among other inſtances, in that of light, and in the production of colors. Now this heterogeneity, which is thought to conſiſt in the different ſizes of the particles, and which may conſiſt in other differences undiſcoverable by us, continuing the ſame, and each kind acting and being acted upon according to it's kind, this amounts in ſome manner to a notion of qualities contained in bodies: and being ſo conceived, the mind knows no more indeed of the real conſtitutions of bodies than it knew before, but proceeds

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in this hypothetical manner a little better, and with greater clearneſs and preciſion, in the purſuit of phyſical enquiries. Theſe enquiries thus aſſiſted enable us to analyſe the compotent particles of bodies in their effects, and to diſcover in them too ſome general laws by which the action of theſe component particles ſeparately and collectively is directed. This is ſome knowledge, and has the appearance of being greater than it is. But there is ſomething ſtill behind, concerning which we cannot boaſt even the leaſt appearance of knowledge. Body acts on body by contact and pulſion. This is certain, tho' it be not ſo certain that body can act no other way, as philoſophers generally aſſume. But even this pulſion is cauſed by motion, as motion is cauſed by pulſion: ſo that we get thus into a circle, and may go eternally round in the dark, without being nearer to diſcover what it is that puts mobility, that eſſential property of matter or body, into action, unleſs we ſuppoſe that the motion impreſſed originally continues ſtill without any diminution. Who can doubt that there is attraction or gravitation, and repulſion, in body, as well as pulſion? Who can withhold his admiration from thoſe diſcoveries that modern philoſophy has made concerning the laws of motion, the properties of bodies that become apparent by them, and the actions of bodies on bodies that follow according to them? But who can or will ever be able to ſay what the ſprings of corporeal nature are, without which there could be neither

action

action nor motion? What is that ſpring, for inſtance, which emits from the body of the ſun innumerable particles of light, that make their paſſage of fifty millions of miles to our earth in ſeven minutes of time, or thereabouts, with a velocity inconceivable tho' demonſtrated? Well may the cauſe be incomprehenſible, when the effect paſſes comprehenſion.

HERE now the word force, of which we are to ſpeak, comes into play, and ſerves as a ſign of the unknown cauſes of the phænomena both of nature and of art; for effects are produced in the works of art by an imitation of thoſe of nature, whereof the cauſes are unknown even to the artificer. When we employ the word alone, it is of very vague ſignification, and imports nothing more than ſome determining power, intellectual or corporeal. But the mind takes two methods to give it greater preciſion, when that is neceſſary. We annex it ſometimes to words which ſignify that whereof we would, on ſuch occaſions, denote the power in general to produce effects in phyſics, in mechanics, in ethics; and thus we ſay the force of wind, the force of a mill, or the force of habit. We annex at other times to it words, that, referring to particular known effects, ſerve to fix on every occaſion the meaning of it; juſt as we annex the words hot or cold, to ſignify certain ſuppoſed qualities of body; and as intelligibly at leaſt as we uſe the names of ſubſtances. Thus we ſpeak of attractive, repelling, impelling force, of the force of

of gravitation, of coheſion, and even of inactivity. Our NEWTON, who has opened, by the help of theſe ſure guides, experiment and geometry, ſo large a field of knowledge and enquiry to preſent and future philoſophers, concerning the greateſt and the leaſt phænomena of nature, was far from pretending to determine the efficient cauſe of his attraction, or what that force is which makes bodies, and every particle of body, mutually tend to one another, and thereby give us an idea of attracting, according to what has been taken notice of already. He diſtinguiſhed ſo carefully between the particular attractions of the ſchools, and his meaning in the uſe of this word, that nothing could be more deſpicable than the ignorance or malice of thoſe who would have confounded them, and have made him an aſſerter of occult qualities, who diſcovered the moſt univerſal and the leaſt occult quality, if I may have leave to call it ſo for once, that ever was, ſince it intercedes the whole corporeal ſyſtem. To this and to the ſeveral kinds of it, he referred all the phænomena that cannot be accounted for by impulſe: and they are many, tho' many of thoſe, which were aſcribed to a ſort of attraction by the ancients, are on better foundations aſcribed to impulſe by the moderns. But neither for the cauſe of impulſe, nor of attraction, nor of any action of body even the moſt ſenſible, can philoſophy account. They, therefore, who uſe the word force as the ſign of an unknown cauſe, whilſt they apply themſelves ſolely to diſcover the laws by

by which this cauſe acts, and the effects it produces, make a proper uſe of the word. They who affect to talk in any other manner, either phyſical or metaphyſical, about force, abuſe the word moſt impertinently, and pervert into artifice a very uſeful art of the mind.

But this is not the only method by which this art of the mind is perverted. It degenerates into artifice, likewiſe, by the uſe which they make of it, who invent words to point out cauſes, they ſuppoſe unknown, of effects whoſe real cauſes are known. In the former method men are led into error by affecting knowledge; in this by affecting ignorance. Whatever force is, it is the cauſe of effects, that are known, but cannot be aſcribed to any cauſe that is known. In this the propriety of the word conſiſts: for if they could be aſcribed to any cauſe known and denominated, it would be improper, and the uſe of it could only ſerve to miſlead. But there may be more than error, there may be fraud, in this caſe; for, to borrow an image from the application of the word chance, the fair gameſter, who ſhould ſee a raffle of ſixes thrown ſeveral times together, might aſcribe it to chance, that is, to an unknown cauſe, very properly; but the ſharper, who had loaded the dice, or who knew that they were loaded, would aſcribe it to chance fraudulently as well as improperly.

I could wiſh that Alciphron and Lysicles had made this obſervation to Euphranor, and had

had applied it to ſhew him why they admitted the word force, and rejected the word grace. The taſk would not have been hard, ſince it would not have been hard to ſhew him real cauſes ſufficiently known, and ſufficiently marked by words, of the effects aſcribed by him to a cauſe ſuppoſed unknown, and marked by a diſtinct word appropriated to this purpoſe. They might have ſhewn theſe cauſes to be the influence of a religious education, a warm head, and a warmer heart; hope, fear, grief, joy, ſtrong paſſions turned by prejudice and habit to devotion, devotion itſelf nurſing it's own principles, the effect in it's turn becoming a cauſe uniform and conſtant, or redoubling it's force, on the leaſt failure, in acts of attrition, contrition, mortification, and repentance. They might have proved not only by probable reaſons, but by indubitable facts, the ſufficiency of theſe and other known cauſes to produce all the effects commonly aſcribed to grace, even the moſt aſtoniſhing that ever appeared in ſaints, confeſſors, or martyrs. Nay, they might have ſhewn that effects more aſtoniſhing, and many of them better vouched, than moſt of theſe, have been, and are ſtill daily, produced in men, whom it would be blaſphemous to repute under the divine influence. ALCIPHRON might have illuſtrated this argument in his ſerious character, by quoting the ſaints, confeſſors, and martyrs of idolatry and hereſy; and LYSICLES in his gayer character, by quoting thoſe of atheiſm, and of the moſt abominable vices, as well as the moſt

most indifferent customs; of paederasty, for instance, and of long beards.

I AM thinking what EUPHRANOR would have replied to the minute philosophers; and can discover no reply worthy of that solidity and that candor which render him equally admirable and amiable. He might have said indeed that he was misunderstood by them, that the parity he insisted on was not meant to "consist in a "proof of grace, as well as force, from the "effects; that it was only meant to answer an "objection against the doctrine of grace, suppo-"sing it proved from revelation, and not to "prove it's existence; that therefore if the pa-"rity was sufficient to prove the possibility of "believing grace without an idea of it, the "objection they had made was answered, and "he aimed at no more." But I think that, as minute philosophers as I am willing to allow ALCIPHRON and LYSICLES to have been, they would have maintained very easily the pertinence of their objection, and the insufficiency of EUPHRANOR's answer.

THEY might have said, there is not even the parity you now suppose between force and grace. Our objection against the latter did in effect anticipate your reply: and if we allowed your reply to be a good one, it would neither strengthen your cause, nor weaken ours. The parity between force and grace, which you confine now to a possibility of believing one as well as the

other, is not ſufficient; becauſe it is not real. The poſſibility of believing force, is nothing more than the poſſibility of believing that every effect has a cauſe, tho' the cauſe be unknown to us, and the propriety of the word conſiſts in the application of it to no other cauſe. The diſparity and impropriety do not ariſe from our having no idea of grace; for it is true that we have none of force: but they ariſe from hence, that there is not the ſame poſſibility of believing a cauſe, whereof we have no idea, and which cannot be aſcertained by it's effects, as there is of believing one whereof we have no idea indeed, but which may be aſcertained by it's effects. You aſſume grace as a cauſe of one particular kind, an immediate influence of God on the mind; and you apply it to effects that may have cauſes of ſeveral kinds. Should a word be invented to ſignify a moral cauſe of effects purely phyſical, or a phyſical cauſe of effects purely moral, you would laugh at the invention; and you would be in the right. But is it a jot leſs ridiculous to aſſign a particular cauſe, either natural or ſupernatural, of effects that may be produced by any, or all, of theſe; and to think to ſave the abſurdity by ſaying that the word, invented to denote this cauſe, has no idea attached to it, no more than that of force?

THE uſe of the word force can have no equivocal conſequence: the uſe of the word grace may. The teſtimony, nay, the conviction, of men, that they felt the influence of this unknown cauſe, would

would not take off the equivocation. How ſhould it, after all the examples that may be brought from daily experience? A real enthuſiaſt doubts no more of his perceptions of the operations of grace, informing his mind, and determining his will, than he doubts of his perceptions of the action of outward objects on his ſenſes, and perhaps leſs.

ANOTHER thing, which I imagine that the minute philoſophers would have ſaid to EUPHRANOR, is this. Since the parity you endeavour to eſtabliſh between force and grace, cannot be ſo eſtabliſhed as to anſwer your purpoſe on any principles of reaſon; it remains that the notion of grace cannot be received, nor the word employed, on any other authority, than that of implicit faith in the revelation by which you ſuppoſe the exiſtence of grace proved. That authority obliges us to believe an action or an influence of God on his elect, the manner of which no human idea can reach: but on what authority, EUPHRANOR, do you anſwer our "objection againſt the doc-"trine of grace, by ſuppoſing it proved by re-"velation?" If you have proved this fact, that the Chriſtian revelation, in which the doctrine of grace is contained, was made by God to mankind, as all facts, and eſpecially one of this importance, ought to be proved, for every other kind of proof proves nothing; we will agree, tho' there be not the ſame reaſon for admitting grace as for admitting force, that both are to

be received alike. Our objection was insufficient; but your answer then was unnecessary: for surely nothing can be more unnecessary, than to go about to establish on probable arguments what is already established on demonstration: and the real existence of grace has been already demonstrated, if the truth of the revelation, in every part of it, has been so; since no proposition can be more demonstrated than this, that a doctrine taught by infinite wisdom and truth is a true doctrine. If you have not proved this fact, and we think you have scarce attempted it, by the proper proofs, your argument is a pure sophism. When we urge that the doctrine of grace, or any other Christian doctrine, is inconceivable, or that it is pregnant with absurd consequences, and therefore unworthy of God; this is urged, in strictness, ex abundantia; for we do not give up the fundamental point, which is, that the authenticity of your scriptures, in the whole and in every part of them, and the truth by consequence of your revelation, has not been yet proved. When you suppose the contrary, therefore, in disputing with us, you beg the question about a principle, in order to confirm a consequence. Thus it seems to me that the dispute between EUPHRANOR and the minute philosophers would have ended. What I have said upon it can be scarce called a digression; since this comparison of force and grace serves admirably well to exemplify what has been said concerning the art and artifice of the mind in the proper

proper and improper uſe of words, to which no determinate ideas are annexed.

SECT. VII.

MANY other arts there are, by which the human mind endeavours to help itſelf in the acquiſition and communication of knowledge. Some of them are as liable to abuſe, as theſe which have been mentioned; and all of them are abuſed more or leſs, to the production and propagation of error: for I preſume, from what I have the means of obſerving, that this would be found true, on a ſtrict examination, even in the applications of geometrical knowledge. But it is time I ſhould put an end to this eſſay, that becomes a treatiſe in bulk at leaſt, if not in matter nor method. That I may not conclude too abruptly however, even for ſuch a rambling eſſay, it is neceſſary I ſhould proceed to diſtinguiſh, in a few more inſtances, between real and imaginary knowledge, the natural powers and the arts, the arts and the artifices, of the human mind: and if theſe inſtances ſhould lead me further than I intend, you will pleaſe to aſcribe this prolixity to my love of truth, and to my deſire of giving you all the ſatisfaction I can.

I WILL obſerve, therefore, that as the ſagacity of the mind has invented various arts, whereby to improve the other faculties and even itſelf, and to carry their united forces a little further than

the immediate leſſons of nature carry them; ſo the affections of the mind have not only turned theſe arts frequently into artifice, an example or two of which we have ſeen, but have gone further. They have not only ſlid imperceptibly, but have plunged openly, into artifice; and philoſophers, thoſe that I intend here, ſeem to acquire knowledge only as a neceſſary ſtep to error: when they have done this, when they have loſt ſight of the former, they grow ſo fond of the latter, that they eſteem it no longer an human, but raiſe it, by an imaginary apotheoſis, up to a divine, ſcience; which is, of all others the moſt pernicious artifice of the mind, according to my lord BACON, and according to truth. "Peſſima "res eſt errorum apotheoſis, et pro peſte intel-"lectus habenda eſt, ſi vanis accedat veneratio."

ARE theſe lovers of wiſdom, theſe ſearchers of truth, you may well aſk, nothing better than venders of falſe wares, venders of hypothetical ſyſtems at beſt, and often of ſuch as are entirely phantaſtical? I fear that they are; and that the only excuſe to be made for them is, that they ſometimes deceive themſelves firſt. They put me in mind of a paſſage in PLUTARCH, who compares the Stoics to ſhips that ſet out under auſpicious names, the Succeſs or the Swiftſure, for inſtance, and who are beaten by tempeſts in their voyage, or caſt away. The great miſchief is, that the implicit paſſenger ſhares the fate of the unwary mariner. In ſhort, ſo it is: the moſt irrational

irrational of all proceedings paſs for the utmoſt efforts of human reaſon; and that philoſophy, which pretends to teach us the ſublimeſt truths, ſerves only to amuſe mankind in a middle or low region, between truth and error, knowledge and ignorance.

Let us now reſume the diviſion of our ideas into ſuch as are natural, and ſuch as are artificial. Thoſe of the firſt ſort are ſuch as God appointed them to be, and are therefore real human ideas. Thoſe of the ſecond are framed by the mind, ſometimes under the direction of judgment, and ſometimes under the prevalent influence of imagination; and are accordingly ſometimes real, and ſometimes phantaſtic. Real ideas are defined, by Mr. Locke, to be "ſuch as have a foundation "in nature, a conformity with the real being "and exiſtence of things, or with their archi-"types." Phantaſtical ideas then are ſuch as have not this foundation, nor this conformity. Now this definition requires a little commentary to make it more clear, and more exact too, if I miſtake not, in one part of it at leaſt

Our ſimple ideas are all real, whether they be ideas of the primary, or of the ſecondary qualities of bodies, as ſome philoſophers ſpeak; or, as I had rather ſay, whether they be ſuch as all body excites in us, like thoſe of extenſion, ſolidity, figure, diviſibility, and mobility; or whether they be ſuch as particular bodies excite in

ty, like thoſe of colors, ſounds, ſmells, taſtes, and the whole tribe of tangible qualities. But in our complex ideas of ſubſtances, the caſe is not the ſame. They muſt be real as long as they are conformable to the combinations of ſimple ideas that exiſt in the ſubſtances which cauſe them. But they are liable to become phantaſtical, becauſe it is in the power of the mind to form them without any regard to exiſtence, and becauſe their reality neither is, nor can be, founded in any thing but real exiſtence actual or paſt. The reaſon of this, which Mr. Locke gives where he treats of the reality of human knowledge, is ſo obvious, that a very little reflection muſt ſuggeſt it to every thinking man, in the preſent ſtate of philoſophy. The real conſtitutions of ſubſtances being entirely unknown, it is as impoſſible we ſhould know which of the powers, that cauſe our ſimple ideas, can co-exiſt, and which cannot, any other way than by experience, as it is that we ſhould know what theſe powers are. Whenever we frame ideas, therefore, of ſubſtances, without being authoriſed by exiſtence, theſe complex ideas muſt needs be phantaſtical; ſince they are compoſed of ſimple ideas proceeding from powers whoſe co-exiſtence is, for aught we know, impoſſible. As obvious and as deciſive as this reaſon is, it has not hindered men from exerciſing, even on ſubſtances, the power by which they boaſt themſelves able to frame ideas of what may exiſt, as well as of what does exiſt, or has exiſted. Thus Plato, and others both before and

and since his time, have peopled invisible worlds with so much poetical licence, that one is tempted to think of him, who seems to have been above the lowness of superstition, that he was very little in earnest, and meaned rather to amuse, than instruct, an age wherein the marvellous was sure to please.

It is the abuse and misapplication of this power, that has opened an inexhaustible source of phantastical ideas, and notions, which have been the bane of philosophy, and have infected almost every branch of science. The proofs are innumerable, and the instances that may be produced, are liable neither to objection nor evasion, among men who join candor with knowledge; two qualifications that are inseparable from the love of truth; that promote one another in the discovery of it; that should always go together, and scarce ever do so. Phantastical ideas and notions of every conceivable kind, and even of substances immortal and mortal, celestial and infernal, divine and human, or amphibious beings, that partake of the two natures, stare us in the face whenever we look into the histories, traditions, and philosophical remains that are come down to us from the remotest antiquity. The same phænomena appear in all those of the intervening ages: and, to say the truth, science, or rather that which passed for science, in many of these, was composed of little else. In these latter ages, even since the resurrection of letters,

since

ſince the improvement of philoſophy and of human reaſon, ſeveral ideas and notions, that were principles of imaginary knowledge to the ancients, have been preſerved in eſteem and veneration: as if that, which had no foundation in nature three thouſand years ago, could have acquired it ſince, and ideas which were phantaſtical in their minds could ripen into reality in ours. They are not the leſs phantaſtical neither for having been purged of ſome circumſtantial abſurdities, and rendered a little more plauſible by ſoftenings and refinements. It muſt be confeſſed that, how deficient ſoever the ancient philoſophers might be in real, they left ſcarce any thing new to be invented in imaginary, ſcience. But they left much to be improved: and this taſk ſeveral of the moderns have executed moſt ſucceſsfully. We may ſay of phantaſtical ideas, in general, what TULLY ſays of one kind of them, that of prognoſtications by dreams, at the cloſe of his treatiſe on Divination: that the ſolicitude and fear they cauſe would have fallen into contempt, if philoſophers, who ſeemed to be perfect maſters of reaſon, had not taken upon them to be protectors of dreams.

BUT theſe general reflections would be more ſeaſonable after ſome that are more particular, and that remain to be made. As far as we have gone, we have ſeen our way, I think, very clearly: and the diſtinction between real and phantaſtical ideas of ſubſtances is ſo well eſtabliſhed, that they cannot be eaſily confounded. The diſtinction

agrees

agrees with one part of Mr. Locke's definition; and is founded in the ſame reaſon. But there is another part of this definition, which ſeems too inaccurately expreſſed in the chapter of real and phantaſtical ideas, and quite untrue, as well as a little inconſiſtent with what he advances elſewhere, according to the explanation of it in the chapter of the reality of knowledge. In the definition it is ſaid that our ideas are real when they have a conformity with their architypes. In the explanation it is ſaid that "all our complex "ideas, except thoſe of ſubſtances, being archi- "types of the mind's own making, not intended "to be copies of any thing, nor referred to the "exiſtence of any thing, as to their originals, "cannot want any conformity neceſſary to real "knowledge." Conformity with what? With themſelves? That meaning is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed. With other ideas of what exiſts, or has exiſted? That cannot be intended neither; for theſe ideas are "not copies of any thing, nor "refer to the exiſtence of any thing as to their "originals." It remains, therefore, that we underſtand no conformity whatſoever neceſſary to make theſe ideas real, when it is ſaid that they want not any that is neceſſary to make them ſo. Now this propoſition I think abſolutely untrue. There is a conformity in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, tho' of another kind, as neceſſary to make theſe ideas real, as the conformity proper to our ideas of ſubſtances is neceſſary to make them real: and all the complex ideas here ſpoken of are real

or

or phantaſtic, as they have or have not this conformity. Thus it will appear, if we do not ſuffer the word archetype to perplex our thoughts. If all our complex ideas, except thoſe of ſubſtances, are archetypes, they muſt be applicable, and properly and really applicable, to ſomething: for it is at leaſt as phantaſtical to frame an archetype applicable to nothing that is really typified by it, as to frame the idea of a ſubſtance that can be referred to no real exiſtence as to the archetype of it. When archetypes are made by nature, they determine our ideas, as God, the author of nature, has appointed that they ſhould be determined: and the knowledge we acquire by them is real knowledge for us and to all human purpoſes, whether theſe ideas do really reſemble their archetypes, or not; according to what has been inculcated already, and perhaps more than once. But when complex ideas and notions are framed by the mind to ſerve as archetypes in it, they muſt be framed with a conformity to the ſame nature that determines the others, or they will be phantaſtical and produce no knowledge, of ſuch as is phantaſtical like themſelves. I do not ſay that they muſt be framed ſo as to contain nothing which implies contradiction. They have been ſo framed, indeed, as to imply it on many occaſions, by ancient and modern ſages and ſaints. But we will ſuppoſe that they are ſo no longer: and on that ſuppoſition we ſay that even this is not ſufficient, and that all theſe ideas muſt have a cloſer conformity, than that of bare poſſibility,

to

to what we know of the existence of things corporeal or intellectual. Universal possibility is the range of divine; particular actuality, past or present, and that in a very confined system, of human intellect.

THE ideas we speak of, it is said, are neither "intended to be copies of any thing, nor referred to the existence of any thing as to their "originals." If this was absolutely true, all such ideas would be archetypes in a strict sense, and could be conceived no otherwise. But it is not absolutely true. It is rather a definition of phantastical, than of real, ideas. Our most complex ideas and notions, which combine in the greatest variety modes and relations, as well as simple ideas, are often copies; they are often referred to existences, to particular existences, as to their originals: and when they are not so, when they are put together in the mind as the mind never perceived them put together in existence, tho' this may be said to be done "by the free choice of the "mind, and without considering any connection "they have in nature;" yet are they not, when they are real, quite arbitrary, nor quite void of reference to existence. Mr. LOCKE shall prove this for me. He says, that one of the ways by which we get these complex ideas of mixed modes is experience and observation of things themselves. In all these instances then, the complex idea is derived from existence, and is a copy first, tho' it becomes an archetype afterwards. It is so in the example he brings,

brings, in that of ſeeing two men wreſtle. It is ſo in a multitude of others, in all thoſe that are real and of real uſe. Murder is as old as human race, and theft as property. Shall we believe that men were lawgivers and moraliſts, before they were ſpectators of the actions of one another? Invention is another of the ways he mentions, in which, by a voluntary act of the mind, ſeveral ſimple ideas are put together in it, and the archi-type precedes exiſtence. But even in theſe caſes, the combinations of ideas, aſcribed to the inven-tion of the mind, are ſuggeſted to it by other combinations, as it would be eaſy to ſhew in the example brought of printing: and tho' the mind cannot be ſaid to copy, when it has no particular exiſtence in view, yet muſt it be allowed to imi-tate, when it has in view not only it's ſimple ideas, but divers combinations of them, derived imme-diately or remotely from what exiſts, or has exiſted, in the ſyſtem of nature: and theſe it has in view always when the complex ideas and notions we frame are not purely phantaſtical. Thoſe of parri-cide and ſacrilege were framed perhaps by ſome men, for they were not by all, before either of theſe crimes had been committed; and ſo they might, without doing much honor to the boaſted power of knowing à priori and independently of exiſtence. The relation of father and ſon is added to the complex idea of murder in one: and as ſoon as one order of men and their property came to be reputed ſacred, it required no ſuperior intel-ligence to foreſee that they might be robbed as well

well as other men. But the mathematician never ſaw a circle mathematically true, ſuch as he deſcribes, and whoſe properties he conſiders: neither did TULLY ever ſee ſuch an image of virtue as he propoſes, and whoſe principles and effects are explained in his Offices. Be it ſo. But the mathematician, who conſiders the properties of a circle, a ſquare, or a rectangle, had obſerved the various terminations of extenſion before he turned mathematician: and the moraliſt had obſerved wherein the good and evil of ſociety conſiſts, and had framed, on what he obſerved, ideas and notions concerning virtue and vice, and the perfection of human nature, before he writ of ethics. The ideas and notions of both, to be productive of real knowledge, muſt be derived from exiſtence, and referred back again to it.

ACCORDING to Mr. LOCKE, our knowledge "concerning theſe ideas is real, and reaches things "themſelves; becauſe we intend things no farther, "than as they are conformable to our ideas." Theſe ideas then, to be real, muſt reach things themſelves; that is, they muſt be rightly abſtracted from things that exiſt, and they muſt be applied to things no farther, than things are conformable to them. This now coincides enough with the opinion I advance. Our ideas are phantaſtic, and our knowledge imaginary, when the former are framed without a ſufficient conformity to exiſtence, and when they are applied to things to which they are not applicable; for as ideas and notions

notions may be void of all reality in themselves, so may they become phantastical by a phantastical application.

The mistake about these complex ideas carries much resemblance to that which Mr. Locke exposes so justly about maxims or axioms. These have been reputed the principles of science, whereas they are in truth the result of it, when they are evident: and cannot pass therefore with any propriety for the præcognita and præconcessa, for which they have been vended in the schools. Just so the complex ideas we speak of are called archetypes, and men infatuate one another enough to imagine that there is a superior intellectual region, as it were, a region of ideas, that are the principles of general scientifical knowledge, from whence particular knowledge is to be deduced, and by which it is to be controlled. Whereas in truth all our ideas and notions are phantastical, as all our maxims are false, when they are not founded in particular knowledge; when they are carried further than evidence, the criterion of truth, accompanies them; and, above all, when they are repugnant, as philosophical and theological ideas and notions frequently are, to this very evidence, and to our knowledge of things as they exist.

Something has been said concerning ideas and notions in a former part of this essay, that may seem to render what is here said about such as are phantastical

phantaſtical the leſs neceſſary. But having occaſion to ſpeak of theſe, I chooſe rather to run the riſque of repetition (uſefully, I hope, to the great end of fixing the bounds of real knowledge) than not to bring into a fuller view this intellectual artifice, which has ſerved to build up ſo much imaginary knowledge at the expence of neglecting the other, and of corrupting it in all it's parts. It was by the means of phantaſtical ideas and notions that chemiſtry was turned into alchemy; aſtronomy into judicial aſtrology; phyſics, by which I underſtand the contemplation of mind as well as body, into theurgic and natural magic; and the religion of nature into various ſyſtems of plain but almoſt blaſphemous doctrines, of abſurd myſteries and ſuperſtitious rites. All theſe effects proceeded from the vain philoſophy of men more intent to imagine what may be, than to obſerve what is: and if we add to theſe ſuch as have proceeded from phantaſtical notions of abſtraction, upon which the tedious and impertinent ſubtilties of ontology are founded, we ſhall have before us very nearly the ſum of all that learned error, into which men have fallen by reaſoning on phantaſtical ideas and notions inſtead of real: as if it was below the majeſty of the human mind to ſeek for reality and truth out of itſelf; and as if our ſenſes were given us only to excite our intellect, and not to inform it by experiment and obſervation.

The principal occaſions on which the mind exerciſes the artifice ſpoken of in framing ideas

that are phantaſtical, may be reduced to theſe three. Philoſophers invent hypothetical ideas and notions in order to erect on them ſuch ſyſtems as cannot be erected on real ideas and notions, that is, on ideas and notions that have a known foundation in nature. They treat of ideas and notions that are incomplete and inadequate, as if they were complete and adequate. They dogmatiſe on obſcure and confuſed ideas and notions, as if they were clear and diſtinct. Let us produce in this eſſay one example at leaſt of the firſt. Your patience and mine too may be worn out by that time: and the examples omitted now may be taken up at ſome other.

SECT. VIII.

I MIGHT have reckoned hypotheſes among thoſe arts of the mind that degenerate into artifice; for ſuch they have been often. The greateſt part of ancient philoſophy, almoſt all except ethics, was nothing elſe: and, to mention no other among the moderns, DES CARTES had much to anſwer for of this kind. His great reputation put hypotheſes into faſhion; and natural philoſophy became a ſort of phyſical romance. But this manner of impoſing imaginary for real knowledge is over, whilſt one more abſurd remains in credit: and, whilſt naturaliſts can ſlide no longer from art into artifice without being detected, metaphyſicians ſet out in artifice; and they ſucceed. An hypotheſis in phyſics can make it's way now no faſter,

faſter, nor no further, than experience countenances and ſupports it. But in metaphyſics it is otherwiſe. There hypotheſes ſtand alone; they ſtand in the place of experimental knowledge; are not ſo much as deduced from it by a fair analogy, but are made independently of, and frequently in direct contradiction to, it.

THEY who plead for hypotheſes urge, not very unreaſonably, that they may be of ſome uſe in the inveſtigation of truth, whilſt they are employed; and that they may ſerve to the ſame purpoſe, even when they are diſcovered to be falſe and are laid aſide: as men who have miſſed their way give ſome inſtruction to others to find it. Beſides which, they do not ſo much as pretend that any hypotheſis ought to be maintained, if a ſingle phænomenon ſtands in direct oppoſition to it. I do not agree to this plea in the whole, but to the latter part of it entirely. By that the criterion of hypotheſes is eſtabliſhed by the favorers of them: we take it as they give it; and this criterion in the phyſical world is real actual exiſtence. The Copernican ſyſtem itſelf ſtands on no other bottom. The Newtonian ſyſtem of attraction ſtands on the ſame: and this bottom is grown ſo broad and ſo firm, that neither the jokes of foreign wits, nor the cavils of foreign philoſophers, can ſhake it as far as ſenſible bodies and ſenſible diſtances are concerned. But, at the ſame time, they who preſume to ſuppoſe it equally certain where inſenſible bodies, the minima naturæ, and

insensible distances, are concerned, as some of our countrymen have done, presume too much; this application of it not having been yet enough confirmed: and they have been accordingly justly censured for raising too hastily an hypothesis into a system. With such precautions, and under such restrictions, hypotheses can do no hurt, nor serve to propagate error. But then it is surely a ridiculous scene to observe how confidently some metaphysical philosophers, who shew themselves extremely scrupulous about such hypotheses as I have mentioned, either admit on the authority of others, or publish on their own, not barely as hypotheses but as demonstrations, the wildest notions imaginable, notions, that are founded in nothing known nor knowable, and that can be tried, therefore, by no criterion whatever.

I have spoken of physics and metaphysics sometimes in the usual style; but I am far from altering the opinion I have already owned, and cannot, therefore, acquiesce to the pretensions of those, who, under the umbrage of a supposed science that considers general natures, essences, being in the abstract, and spirit or immaterial substance, would place themselves in a rank of philosophical preeminence above those, who consider corporeal nature in the several phænomena, and would controul what they neglect, particular experimental knowledge. As to the ontosophists, they are the lineal descendants of the schoolmen; and they deal, like their progenitors, in little else than hard words,

words, and ſuch abſtract ideas and notions, as render our knowledge neither more diſtinct nor more extenſive, but ſerve to perplex it and to invelope in their obſcurity what is in itſelf very plain. I ſhall neglect them therefore, as the reſt even of the learned world appears to do. The example I am to produce, under this head of hypothetical ideas and notions, ſhall be taken from thoſe philoſophers who uſurp and appropriate to themſelves, as if it were their peculiar province, the doctrine of ſpirits and ſpiritual things; whereas pneumatics, taken in this ſenſe, if they are any thing, are as truly objects of phyſics, as pneumatics taken, in a more proper ſenſe, for that branch of natural philoſophy whoſe object is the air we breathe. This diſtinction, however, has been eſtabliſhed: and by the help of it, whilſt naturaliſts are not at liberty to make hypotheſes that are not founded in ſome degree of experimental knowledge, and that are not liable to be controlled by it in all their parts and in all their progreſs, metaphyſicians are left at liberty to frame as many phantaſtical ſyſtems as they pleaſe on ideas and notions purely hypothetical, without any regard to this foundation, or this control, as we obſerved juſt now.

As ſoon as men began to reflect on their own nature, and on that of all the bodies which ſurrounded them, they could not fail to obſerve ſolidity, extenſion, figure, diviſibility, and mobility, the moſt apparent properties of body or matter. As little could they fail to obſerve the operations

of their own minds, in which they had the perceptions of theſe ideas; and to frame ideas of thought, and of the ſeveral modes of thinking, particularly of that which has the power of beginning motion. None of theſe ideas were contained in their ideas of body, nor neceſſarily connected with them: and that of a power to begin motion, which they obſerved to be in the whole animal kind, and which they knew conſciouſly to be the effect of thought, muſt ſtrike them as a ſuperior property to that of mobility, with which they had occaſion to compare it every inſtant. Taking it for granted, then, that they knew, as ſoon as they began to philoſophiſe, all the perceivable properties of matter, they concluded that ſuch things, as could not be accounted for by theſe, were to be accounted for by the properties of ſome unperceivable or unperceived matter, or elſe by the properties of ſome other ſubſtance. The firſt aſſumption was that of the moſt ancient philoſophers: the other was made much later, at leaſt it was much later that extended and non-extended ſubſtance were plainly contradiſtinguiſhed.

Thus the diſtinction of body and ſoul came to be made and eſtabliſhed among almoſt all the philoſophers. It would be tedious even to run over the confuſed notions that were entertained about ſoul. It was fire; but a divine fire to ſome: it was air to others: a fifth element to others, "quintam quandam naturam*," and

* Tuſc. quæſt.

therefore

therefore ARISTOTLE called it by a new name, entelekia, to ſignify a certain continued and perpetual motion. "Sic ipſum animum entelekian "appellat novo nomine, quaſi quandam continua-"tam motionem et perennem*." In a word, it was ſomething, they knew not what, which they thought fit to call breath or ſpirit, for a reaſon obvious enough: and the notion of it anſwered philoſophical purpoſes in metaphyſics, juſt as well as that of occult qualities anſwered them in phyſics. A vaſt profuſion of ſouls followed. They were created by the exorbitant power of hypotheſis as faſt and as often as they were wanted. There was an univerſal ſoul common to the whole ſyſtem of corporeal being, or a ſoul of the world; for the world was, in the imagination of ſome of the ancients, a great animal, and conſiſted, like the animals it contains, of a body and a ſoul. There were particular ſouls for celeſtial and terreſtrial bodies, a ſoul of the ſun, a ſoul of every ſtar and planet, a vegetative ſoul for plants, a ſenſitive ſoul for other animals; and for man there was an ample proviſion of three, of the two laſt and of a rational ſoul, which was a participation of the divine mind, or an emanation from it, or an infuſion out of it.

IF we deſcend from thoſe times to our own, we ſhall find the ſame hypotheſis maintained with a little leſs confuſion of opinions, in more preciſe and uniform terms at leaſt, but ſtill as unintel-

* Tuſc. quaeſt.

ligibly as ever. SPINOZA, indeed, acknowledged but one ſubſtance, and that matter; as abſurdly as others have acknowledged but one ſubſtance, and that ſpirit. On the principle of the former, the vegetative, the ſenſitive, and even the rational ſoul, can be nothing elſe than matter differently fermented and ſubtiliſed in ſyſtems of it differently organiſed; for which opinion whatever is ſaid, ſhould be ſaid, and might be ſaid, without admitting the principle of SPINOZA in it's full extent; without ſuppoſing God a material being, from whence the moſt abſurd conſequences would follow; and without denying his exiſtence, which would imply, if that be poſſible, more. But the general run of opinion aſſumes the ſoul to be a ſpiritual ſubſtance, and a ſpiritual ſubſtance to be unextended, indiviſible, and therefore immortal. Now this aſſumption helps the hypotheſis ſo little, that the extravagancies fancy builds on it are as great, and the difficulties oppoſed to it perhaps greater, than when the ſoul was deemed material by ſome Chriſtian, as well as Pagan, philoſophers; for that it was ſo your learned friends will, I am ſure, confeſs. Many notions, extravagant and phantaſtical to the utmoſt, might be cited. Can there be any thing more extravagant, or that implies contradiction more groſsly, than to divide this indiviſible ſubſtance, like the myſtic divines, who had a precedent for it in that myſtic philoſopher PLATO, into an upper and lower part? The good madmen mean well, no doubt: but there is reaſon to ſuſpect that, among their diſciples, the

lower

lower part of the ſoul and the body are much defiled by imagination, and ſenſation too, whilſt the purity of the upper part, where the underſtanding and the will reſide, preſerves the conſcience in a moſt heavenly tranquillity.

SHOULD you object to this inſtance of extravagant opinions, built on the hypotheſis of the ſoul conſidered as a ſimple un-extended being united to the body, becauſe it is taken from thoſe of madmen who are capable of framing the moſt extravagant and falſeſt notions on the moſt reaſonable and evident principles; let us lay aſide all other inſtances, and produce, as the moſt extravagant of all, that wherein every man who deals in theology, mad or ſober, concurs; that opinion for the ſake of which this hypotheſis of the ſoul was invented, and which is as little reconcileable to the wiſdom of God and to the moral ideas of juſtice and goodneſs, as thought is to all the properties that we know of matter. The human ſoul then, which participates of the divine nature by emanation, by infuſion, or by ſome other incomprehenſible act, on account of which alone we are ſaid to be made after the image of God, is confined to the human body, and is diffuſed thro' the whole to inform and to govern; or has a principal reſidence, like the ſeat of empire, in the pineal gland, or in that part of the brain where I have read that there is a ſort of nervous juice, the ſource of animal ſpirits, of a moſt fragrant ſmell; and which puts me in mind of the perfume

perfume that the inſpiring divinity ſpread in the temples where oracles were delivered to the Pagans. Whilſt the ſoul is thus immerſed in matter, the luſtre of it is obſcured by this removal from it's divine original. The force and energy of it is clogged; nay, it ſeems ſince the fall to contract an inclination to corporeity, and to aſſimilate in ſome ſort with this inferior nature, as if they were homogeneous. Our firſt parents received from ſenſible objects, after their fall, ſuch ſtrong impreſſions and ſuch deep traces in their brains, "de ſi grands veſtiges, & des traces ſi "profondes*," that they may well have communicated theſe to the brains of all their deſcendants. Now the thoughts of the ſoul being neceſſarily conformable to the traces that are in the brain, it is, you ſee, demonſtrated moſt metaphyſically, that in this reſpect the ſoul is dependent on the body, and it's thoughts and inclinations on the thoughts and inclinations of thoſe who begot the body it inhabits, in a perpetual gradation of generations down from ADAM and EVE. Thus the ſoul, that ſpiritual monarch of the human ſyſtem, is ſubject not only to a limitation of power, but to a determination to govern ill. The ſoul does not remain long indeed in this ſtate, becauſe the ſyſtem it governs is ſoon diſſolved by death. But the ſhort time it remains in it decides of it's ſtate for eternity. It ſeems to be delivered from the body, and to be reſtored to the full force of it's nature, and to the free exer-

* MALEB. lib. ii. c. 7.

ciſe

ciſe of it's powers, in order only to ſuffer, for the moſt part, during an eternity, for what it did in the government of the body when it enjoyed neither during a moment. As ſoon as philoſophers and divines are able to reconcile all this to their ideas of the wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs of God, the hypotheſis will be no longer neceſſary, at leaſt to the former; ſince they will not find it at all more difficult to reconcile thought to their ideas of the properties of matter.

The taſk would be endleſs, and I ſhall neither give myſelf, nor you, the trouble to enumerate more of the phantaſtical ideas, notions, and opinions, that have been raiſed on this hypotheſis, of a ſimple immaterial active being, which underſtands and wills, or by which we are made able to underſtand and will. I make this diſtinction, becauſe philoſophers who ſet out from the ſame goal, take very different ways in the purſuit of ideas equally phantaſtical. Some of them baniſh out of the whole extent of Being, every thing, except ideas and ſpirit, whereof we can have no idea, and which is only known by conſciouſneſs. Nothing in heaven, nor earth, none of thoſe bodies, which we repute to be ſenſible objects have any exiſtence out of ſome mind or other. They may exiſt, eternally, and be always actually preſent in an eternal ſpirit; but they have beſides this no exiſtence, except one that is occaſionally communicated. They exiſt in created ſpirits, when they are perceived; and they ceaſe to exiſt, when they are not perceived there. Other philoſophers, again, declare

declare the exiſtence of body hard to be proved; whilſt that of ſpirit, under this notion of it, needs no proof, according to them. They pretend to have a knowledge of immaterial ſpirit that excludes all doubt, and they aſſume hypothetically that there is ſuch an entity as body; which is the very reverſe, I preſume, of the moſt evident dictates of common ſenſe. But however, on this bold aſſumption, that there is ſuch a being as body, they proceed to account for the union of the ſoul with body, on one hand, and with God on the other; and ſo multiplying hypothetical ideas one on another, they open a phantaſtical ſcene of ſcience, wherein every man's imagination (for every man has the ſame right to imagine) is his ſole guide, and wherein it is plain from their extravagant writings that they have, and from the nature of the thing that they can have, no other guide.

DES CARTES, who might not ſo much as dream perhaps that philoſophers would ſet themſelves in good earneſt to baniſh body out of the univerſe, and the univerſe with it, affirmed two ſubſtances; one, whoſe eſſence is extenſion, and to which all the modifications of extenſion belong; and one, whoſe eſſence is thought, and to which all the modifications of thinking belong. Now both theſe definitions are ſo evidently falſe, that every man may know them to be ſo, who conſiders them without philoſophical prejudice, of all prejudices the ſtrongeſt. How ſtrong it is, appears

pears in this very inſtance; for when DES CARTES affirmed extenſion alone to be the eſſence of body, he was led by his philoſophical prejudices to affirm an identical propoſition, and to beg a queſtion. He affirmed that body is body, for he ſuppoſed the plenum. It is true we cannot ſeparate body in our ideas from extenſion, neither can we conceive body excluſively of ſolidity. But we can ſeparate extenſion from ſolidity in our ideas; and therefore, as Mr. LOCKE obſerves, if it be a good argument "that ſpirit is different "from body, becauſe thinking includes not the "idea of extenſion in it; ſpace, or extenſion "alone is not body, becauſe it includes not the "idea of ſolidity in it." In ſhort, they are ſo evidently diſtinct ideas, that he who confounds them in words, muſt diſcern their difference in his underſtanding, whether he will or no. The difference is ſo evident, that if the plenum was admitted, and pure ſpace rejected, yet ſtill the definition of the Carteſians would be imperfect; for the eſſence of body throughout this imaginary plenum could not be extenſion alone. Solidity could not be baniſhed out of it, but extenſion would continue to include ſolidity, as ſolidity is allowed to include extenſion; and extenſion and ſolidity would be two diſtinct ideas, but two eſſential properties of the ſame ſubſtance ſtill.

THE definition of thinking ſubſtance is not truer than this of extended ſubſtance, and the falſity of it is obvious to conſtant experience. That

we

we live, and move, and think according to certain human modes of thinking, and that there muſt be ſomething in the conſtitution of our ſyſtem of being, beyond the known properties of matter, to produce ſuch phænomena as theſe, are undeniable truths. But here certainty ends: what that ſomething is, we know not: and ſurely it is time we ſhould be convinced that we cannot know it. Thankfulneſs and modeſty would become us better than philoſophical and theological aſſurance: thankfulneſs, when we look up to the great Author of all natures, for raiſing ours, either in kind or in degree, above that of any other animal; and modeſty, when we look down on ourſelves, to avow our ignorance. Inſtead of this, vanity and preſumption determine philoſophers to conclude, that, ſince they cannot account for the phænomena of the mind by what they know very ſuperficially of ſolid extended ſubſtance, this mind muſt be ſome other ſubſtance. On this foundation they reaſon admirably well à priori, and prove with much plauſibility that this mind, this ſoul, this ſpirit, is not material, and is immortal. In the ſame manner they proceed, and well they may, to prove any thing that metaphyſics and theology want to have proved. But this foundation is an aſſumption that cannot ſtand an examination à poſteriori, and that, if it could ſtand it, would carry us but one ſtep forward in knowledge; for if nothing which is an object of real knowledge could be oppoſed to the immateriality and immortality of this ſubſtance, the inſuperable difficulty

difficulty of accounting for the action of mind on body, and of body on mind, that are reciprocally and in their turns both active and paſſive, would ſtop our philoſophical enquiries. The divine alone would have made a ſtep ſufficient for his purpoſe. Thus do the reputed maſters of human reaſon advance propoſitions as demonſtrated truths, which have not even the merit of a tolerable hypotheſis. But it is not enough to affirm, like them: I muſt prove what I ſay, by appealing to that criterion of truth, from which there lies no appeal, to clear and determinate ideas duly abſtracted from the phaenomena of nature, and to an intuitive knowledge of their agreement or diſagreement. Now this, I think, it will not be hard to do.

I DO not pretend to deny the poſſible exiſtence of ſpiritual, that is, according to the preſent notion of immaterial beings. I have no more right to deny that there are ſuch, than the perſons juſt mentioned have to affirm it. God alone, the author of all beings, knows how many different kinds of ſubſtances, how many various ſorts of beings, his omnipotent will has made to exiſt. But this I ſay, that we have not the ſame proof of the exiſtence of unextended and ſpiritual, as we have of extended and ſolid, ſubſtance. We have not the ſame proof, becauſe we have not the ſame knowledge on which to ground any. We gueſs probably, if you pleaſe, from what we obſerve of our own minds, that one exiſts: but we know as certainly, as God has given us the

means of knowing outward objects, that the other exiſts. The ideas we receive by reflection are in this caſe and in this reſpect equivocal: they do not reach up to the apparent nature of the ſubſtance that cauſes them. But the ideas we receive from ſenſation are not ſo; they do reach up to the apparent nature of the ſubſtance that cauſes them. The former do not ſo much as conſtitute what Mr. Locke calls a nominal eſſence: the latter do. There are many queſtions to be aſked, no doubt, concerning body, which it is impoſſible to anſwer, as well as concerning ſpirit; becauſe we are made incapable of knowing the real eſſence of any ſubſtance; and if there was no other difference, we might as well affirm the exiſtence of immaterial, as of material ſubſtance. But there is another difference; and it is not enough to have hinted it, I muſt explain it.

Mr. Locke takes much pains to ſhew that the notion of ſpirit involves no more difficulty nor obſcurity in it, than that of body *: and yet, I think, I can make him prove the contrary for me, and ſhew, againſt his own aſſertion, that we have "more and clearer primary ideas belonging "to body, than we have belonging to immaterial ſpirit." Primary ideas are the ideas of ſuch qualities as exiſt always in the ſubſtance to which they belong, whether they are perceived or not. They are, therefore, eſſential to it, and

* Eſſay, lib. ii. c. 23.

productive,

productive, by their operations, of thoſe ſecondary qualities which may be ſaid only to exiſt in our perceptions of them. Of the firſt ſort are ſolidity and extenſion, to mention no others, the primary qualities, and in our ideas the eſſence of matter, of which we can frame no conception excluſively of them. Theſe notions I have taken from Mr. LOCKE: and they lead me to aſk what the primary ideas are of ſpirit or immaterial ſubſtance? The primary idea or the eſſence of it is thought: as body is the extended, this is the thinking ſubſtance, ſays DES CARTES. Thought then, actual thought, is the eſſence of the ſoul or ſpirit; and by conſequence ſo inſeparable from it, that we cannot conceive the ſoul or ſpirit to exiſt ſeparately from, or excluſively of, thought. But this I know to be untrue: and I may well own, ſince LOCKE has owned the ſame, that I have "one of thoſe dull ſouls that does not "perceive itſelf always to contemplate ideas." I diſtinguiſh very well between being aſleep and being awake. I continue to live, but not to think, during the ſoundeſt ſleep; and the faculties of my ſoul and body awake together. Thus evidently do I know that thought is no more the eſſence of ſoul, than motion of body; and if thought is not ſo, I aſk what is?

BODY is capable of receiving and communicating motion by impulſe; but without ſolidity and extenſion it would be capable of neither. Thought, not being the eſſence of the ſoul, can

be nothing but an action of it; and thus far anſwers motion in body. But what is it then which anſwers ſolidity and extenſion, and is the primary quality of ſpirit? Is it immateriality? Is it the negation of material eſſence? No man will, I preſume, give ſo ſilly an anſwer. At leaſt no man who does, muſt expect a reply. He who affirms that there is in the compoſition of the human ſyſtem a ſubſtance to which cogitability belongs, as well as a ſubſtance to which mobility belongs, muſt have ideas of the firſt of theſe ſubſtances prior in the order of nature to that of it's cogitability, as he has ideas of the ſecond prior in the ſame order to that of it's mobility; or he muſt talk at random, and affirm what he does not know. His ſuppoſed diſtinct ſubſtance muſt ſink into nothing, or be confounded with the other: for it will coſt a reaſonable mind much leſs to aſſume that a ſubſtance known by ſome of it's properties may have others that are unknown, and may be capable, in various ſyſtems, of operations quite inconceivable by us, according to the deſigns of infinite wiſdom; than to aſſume that there is a ſubſtance, concerning which men do not pretend to know what it is, but merely what it is not.

It may be ſaid, Locke has ſaid it, that we know no more of the ſolid, than of the thinking, thing; nor how we are extended, than how we think. But the compariſon is improper, and unfair. It is improper, becauſe it compares the operation

operation of an aſſumed ſubſtance, with the known properties of a real ſubſtance. It is unfair, becauſe it ſlides over and evades the objection that we have not a poſitive idea of any one primary property of ſpirit, or at leaſt that if cogitability be ſuch a primary quality, this definition of the ſoul is no better than that of a moveable ſubſtance would be, if it was given as the full definition of body. But, beſides, tho' the coheſion of the ſolid particles of body be not ſufficiently accounted for by the preſſure of the air, or of any ambient fluid; and tho' that ſeeming property of matter, which is called for want of a better name attraction, be not yet perhaps enough eſtabliſhed; yet we have a very clear idea of coheſion in it's effects, by which inſenſible atoms are ſo united and held together, that the bodies they compoſe become ſenſible to us, and give us the ideas of ſolidity and extenſion. Have we any knowledge proportionable to this, as imperfect as it is, of ſoul under the notion of of an immaterial ſpirit? It cannot be ſaid that we have. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude without preſumption, againſt two of the greateſt men of their age, againſt DES CARTES, that thinking is not the eſſence of the ſoul; and, againſt LOCKE, that a ſolid extended ſubſtance is not quite ſo hard to be conceived as a thinking immaterial one.

BUT LOCKE, much leſs dogmatical than DES CARTES, how far ſoever he favoured the reign-

ing opinion, or thought it neceſſary for him to keep meaſures with thoſe who ſupport it, was far from aſſerting the immateriality of the ſoul. He found inducements of probability to this and to the contrary opinion; certainty of demonſtration for neither. When he is to ſhew that our knowledge is narrower and more confined than our ideas *, he brings the inſtance of theſe two, of matter and thinking, and of the impoſſibility of knowing, by the contemplation of them, or by any other way, except by revelation, whether that which thinks in us be not material. He ſees "no contradiction in it, that "the firſt eternal thinking Being ſhould, if he "pleaſed, give to certain ſyſtems of created "ſenſeleſs matter, put together as he thinks fit, "ſome degrees of ſenſe, perception, and thought." He endeavours to guard againſt theological choler, by urging "that the great ends of morality "and religion are well enough ſecured without "philoſophical proofs of the ſoul's immateri-"ality, ſince it is evident that he who made us "——ſenſible, intelligent beings can," and he adds, "will, reſtore us to the like ſtate of ſenſi-"bility in another world." But all this precaution could not ſave him from the joint attacks of philoſophers and of divines, not very orthodox on other points. They † have inſiſted, ſince thought is not the eſſence of matter, nor an attribute of matter neither, in as much as it does not flow neceſſarily from that eſſence, it can-

* Eſſay, lib. iv. c. 3. † LEIBNITZ, WOLLASTON, &c.

not

not have been communicated nor ſuperadded, even by omnipotence, to any ſyſtem of matter; becauſe eſſences are unchangeable, and attributes uncommunicable: ſo that matter cannot be made to think. The moment any ſyſtem begins to think, it ceaſes to be material: and that which was matter becomes a ſubſtance of another kind. In fine, that it is nonſenſe to aſſert that God "can * ſuperadd a faculty of thinking to incogitativity, of acting freely to neceſſity, and ſo "on †." It is hard to ſay, whether in theſe

* Rel. of nature delineated. § 9.

† SINCE it has been obſerved on this occaſion, in how trifling a manner the pretended maſters of abſtract reaſoning ſubject the reality of things to words; it may not be improper to obſerve another fallacy that runs through all their diſcourſes, concerning the thinking ſubſtance.

WHEN we know with certainty that any being exiſts, many doubts may be raiſed, we may endeavour to ſolve them by hypotheſes, and we may endeavour it in vain: but ſtill they will be no more than difficulties, to the ſolution of which our knowledge does not extend. The known truth will remain unſhaken. On the other hand, when we aſſume on probable arguments that any being exiſts, the doubts and difficulties that ariſe are real objections; becauſe they are probable arguments oppoſed to probable arguments, and the whole being hypotheſis, the whole may be ſhaken.

THEISTS demonſtrate the exiſtence of one ſupreme, infinite, all perfect Being. Atheiſts cavil; and, tho' they cannot unravel the demonſtration, they oppoſe doubts and difficulties: as if probable arguments, ſuppoſing theſe to be ſuch, could prevail againſt demonſtration. Their proceeding is abſurd: and reaſon is evidently on the ſide of the theiſt. But now, are they, who aſſert a diſtinct thinking ſubſtance united in the human ſyſtem to a material unthinking ſubſtance in the caſe of the theiſts? Are they, who deny this, in

and other common-place reaſonings on the ſame ſubject, there is more preſumption, or trifling

the caſe of the atheiſts? Certainly not. The former, except a few who are in the height of a metaphyſical delirium, do not pretend that they can demonſtrate by reaſon what they maintain, and yet they argue as if they had made this demonſtration. This is the fallacy I mean: and I need not go far to ſeek an inſtance of it, ſince I find one in the Religion of Nature delineated, that follows the paſſage I have quoted.

THIS ſolemn author then, in his third argument for the immortality of the ſoul, drops the queſtion, whether it be immaterial or not, on which he had pronounced ſo dogmatically, a few pages before, and aſks, only by way of objection, "whether that ſoul, be it what it will, which "ceaſes to think when the body is not fitly diſpoſed, can "think at all when the body is quite diſſolved?" Now to this queſtion he propoſes to give an anſwer, of which he ſpeaks modeſtly and diffidently, and yet preſumes it may be turned "even into an argument for the immortality of the ſoul."

THIS anſwer comes out to be nothing better than a ſtring of ſuppoſitions. He, who ſays that the power of thinking is a faculty, ſuperadded by the Creator to certain ſyſtems of matter in various degrees and proportions, aſſumes indeed, but he aſſumes conformably to the phaenomena. He, who ſays that thought is the eſſence of a diſtinct ſubſtance united to certain ſyſtems of matter, becauſe he cannot conceive how matter can be made capable of thinking even by omnipotence, aſſumes without any ſupport from the phaenomena, nay even in an apparent contradiction to them. Every inſtance, therefore, of this contradiction is a good argument in favor of the former, and againſt the latter, opinion. No matter. The pneumatic philoſopher proceeds as if his firſt propoſition was proved, and he had only a few difficulties to remove, rather than objections to refute, as if his doctrine wanted only to be explained. He explains it no more, than he invented it, on the foundation of that which actually is, but on what he thinks may be: and ſo he may argue on, if he finds men idle enough to diſpute much with him, as long as his imagination can ſupply phantaſtic ideas and notions.

and

and playing with words in a ſolemn dogmatical tone. They amount to no more this. We

THE very queſtion, whether "the ſoul which ceaſes to "think when the body is not fitly diſpoſed, can think at "all when the body is quite diſſolved," ſuppoſes that there is a ſoul, that is, a diſtinct ſubſtance, united to it, tho' this neither has been, nor can be, proved. The anſwer ſets out by ſuppoſing that this diſtinct ſubſtance is a limited being; limited, obſtructed, clogged by the body. Even here we might interrupt this licentious maker of hypotheſes, and inſiſt that it is not congruous to reaſon to aſſume that a ſubſtance, which is immaterial according to him, which has none above it except the ſubſtance of God himſelf, according to St. AUSTIN, and by which we are made after the image of God, according to all thoſe who maintain the ſame doctrine, (for he muſt not be ſuffered to ſlide over any of his, or their extravagant aſſertions) is limited, obſtructed, clogged by that material ſubſtance, by which we are allied to the beaſts of the field, and made after the image of other animals.

BUT to paſs by this, the ſoul then is "limited, it's activity "and faculties being more obſtructed and clogged at one time, "than another, and moſt of all in ſleep, or a deliquium." The eyes, the two windows of it's priſon, are ſhut, and the nerves which receive the impreſſions of outward objects, and convey ſenſations to the ſoul, are benumbed. This branch of knowledge is cut off, therefore, in ſuch circumſtances; and thought cannot be exerciſed on objects that do not preſent themſelves to the ſoul. But why then is it not exerciſed on the ideas and notions that the ſoul is poſſeſſed of already, in the contemplation of which it has no need of ſenſe; ſo much otherwiſe, that detached from ſenſe, and wrapped in pure intellect, the ſoul meditates, and reaſons with greater intenſeneſs and clearneſs about theſe abſtract ideas and notions?

IF you aſk this queſtion, you will be anſwered by other ſuppoſitions. You will be told, that the uſe of words is neceſſary, even in abſtract meditation, that this ſilent language depends on memory, and that memory depends on certain tracks which are made on the brain. You will be told that theſe tracks are the characters of that book wherein the ſoul muſt

metaphysicians and ontosophists have fixed the essence of matter. It can be no other than it is

must read to think in this manner; and that when the characters are overcast by vapours, or any other way darkened, the soul can read them no more till the cloud is dispelled. You may object that thinking cannot be, on this hypothesis, the essence of the soul, or that the soul must cease to be what it is every time we fall into found sleep, or faint entirely into a deliquium; and return to be what it was before, every time we awake or come out of the deliquium; which differs little from assuming a perpetual creation of souls every twenty-four hours at least. There is something so very ridiculous in this notion, that I should be ashamed to mention it, if it did not follow necessarily that of a substance whose essence is thought, and who does not always think, and if it was not of use to shew in every instance, as it occurs, the monstrous absurdities in which the reasonings of these metaphysicians are apt to terminate.

The metaphysician we have to deal with here screens himself from the imputation of this absurdity, as well as he can by a change of terms. He asserts only that the soul preserves a capacity of thinking "even in those circumstances in which "it thinks no more than if the body was destroyed:" And from hence he assumes, that "it may, and will, preserve this "capacity when the body is destroyed, cut to pieces, or mouldered to dust." He asserts the first on the evidence of the phaenomena. He assumes the last without any possible evidence from them, nay with a strong presumption derived from them against him. Whilst we are alive we preserve the capacity of thinking, I should rather call it the faculty; just as we preserve the faculty of moving, and other faculties plainly corporeal, subject alike to many impediments and many infirmities of the body in which the faculty of thinking has the largest share, as it might be shewn in various instances, in that of madness particularly. When we are dead, all these faculties are dead with us: and the sole difference that we make in our judgments of the one and the other arises from hence, that we imagine the capacity or faculty of thinking to belong to a substance distinct from the body, concerning which the phaenomena can shew us nothing after death; and concerning

repre-

repreſented in our abſtract ideas, thoſe eternal natures independent of God himſelf. If you ſup-

which by conſequence metaphyſicians and divines think themſelves at liberty to ſay whatever they pleaſe. You would ſmile, if you heard any one ſay, that the man who has preſerved the faculty of walking, after having loſt and recovered frequently the uſe of his legs, will for this reaſon walk eternally. But you hearken very gravely when you hear another ſay, on as little knowledge, that he will think eternally, becauſe he has preſerved the capacity of thinking, after loſing it, in the whole or in part, on ſo many occaſions.

How much ſoever we may deem the thinking and unthinking ſubſtance to be diſtinct in nature, ſtill it will be true that theſe aſſumed ſouls were given to inform bodies, and thereby complete the human ſyſtem. The ſyſtem would be too imperfect to anſwer any conceivable purpoſe of making it, if either of them was wanting. Without thinking, the body would be unable to begin motion, and to perform many neceſſary corporeal operations. Without a body, the ſoul would be unable to acquire the firſt elements of knowledge, the materials of thought. In ſhort, neither of them could exiſt, and act, in a ſtate of total ſeparation from the other. WOLLASTON was ſo ſenſible of this, that he ſuppoſes it, and in order to maintain that the ſoul does not ceaſe to exiſt when the body does, notwithſtanding this admiſſion, he retails to his readers an old trite chimera of the platonic philoſophy, which has been mentioned above. He aſſumes that the ſoul has another body beſides this which periſhes, "ſome fine vehicle, that "dwells with it in the brain, and goes off with it at death." This innermoſt body, which may be compared to the ſhirt of the ſoul, receives impreſſions from the outward body, which may be compared to it's great coat: and as thoſe impreſſions of ſenſible objects are communicated to the ſhirt, ſo the ſhirt communicates them to the ſoul, who ſits enveloped in it in the brain. On the other ſide, reciprocally, the ſoul, being thus put into motion, produces motion in the "contiguous ſpirits and "nerves by moving it's own vehicle, and ſo moves the body." When the great coat is worn out, or deſtroyed by any accident, the ſoul flies in it's ſhirt away into the open fields of heaven,

poſe

poſe it modified or mixed in any ſyſtem, ſo as to be no longer inert and ſenſeleſs, it is no longer

and thus undreſſed, as it were, the impreſſions, that were made mediately by the nerves, are made immediately on it: thus it becomes "as it were, all eye to viſible objects, and all ear to "audible, and ſo on."

I MIGHT have explained this hypotheſis further, with Mr. WOLLASTON's help, but my patience would not ſerve me; tho' he thinks it contains nothing impoſſible, and therefore nothing but what may be. Many things are; he ſays very truly, by ways which we do not, nor can underſtand. But then this plea is not to be admitted in every caſe alike; for if it was, it would go a great way to ſcreen the falſe theories which philoſophers are apt to frame both in phyſics and metaphyſics. A primum mobile, an element of fire, were names invented to ſignify things which have no exiſtence; and ſuch was the word ſoul, perhaps, in philoſophical conſideration, if we take it not for a faculty ſuperadded to the human corporeal ſyſtem, but for a diſtinct ſubſtance united to it, and cooperating with it. But metaphyſical figments impoſe longer than phyſical, becauſe there is more room for WOLLASTON's plea, and becauſe hypotheſes may be heaped on hypotheſes with leſs control in one, than in the other.

I MIGHT add, that this figment of a ſoul, if it be a figment, received ſtrength from the ſuperſtitious theology of the heathens. Nothing can confirm and conſecrate notions, however erroneous, ſo much: and this philoſophical notion was incorporated into theology from the firſt. Legiſlators and magiſtrates, poets and prieſts, as well as philoſophers, enforced it with all their authority: and the event has been a proof of this great truth, that "the underſtanding is as ſubject to the "impreſſions of fancy, as to thoſe of vulgar notions*."

I MIGHT obſerve further how little it became WOLLASTON, who would not believe that thinking is a faculty added by the Creator to certain ſyſtems of matter, becauſe he could not reconcile this opinion to his idea of matter, tho' this opinion is conformable to all the phænomena of the mind; how little,

* BACON.

con-

conformable to our ideas: it is therefore no longer matter, ſuch as it came out of the region of poſſibility into that of actuality; it is another ſubſtance, and muſt be called by another name. God cannot make our ideas of incogitativity to be ideas of thinking, nor our ideas of neceſſity to be ideas of acting freely. To ſuch reaſoners it would be, I think, ſufficient to ſay: Learn that human knowledge is derived from exiſtence; and that to be real, it muſt be conformable to things as they exiſt. Conform your ideas, therefore, to them, and pretend no longer to control or to determine particular exiſtence by abſtract notions. As long as matter is ſenſeleſs and inert, it is not a thinking ſubſtance, nor ought to be called ſo. But when, in any ſyſtem of it, the eſſential properties, extenſion, ſolidity, &c. are maintained, that ſyſtem is material ſtill, tho' it become a ſenſitive plant, a reaſoning elephant, or a refining metaphyſician. It would be nonſenſe to aſſert, what no man does aſſert, that the idea of incogitativity can be the idea of thinking: but it is nonſenſe, and ſomething worſe than nonſenſe, to aſſert what you aſſert, that God cannot give the faculty of thinking, a faculty in the principle of

I ſay, it became him, and muſt become any other man who reaſons in the ſame way, to urge, in defence of all his hypotheſes and paradoxes, that many things are by ways which we cannot underſtand.

But I will detain you no longer about ſuch diſcourſe as would convince you, if you heard it at Monro's, that the philoſopher who held it was a patient of the doctor, not yet perfectly reſtored to his ſenſes.

it

it entirely unknown to you, to ſyſtems of matter whoſe eſſential properties are ſolidity, extenſion, &c. not incogitativity. This term of negation can be no more the eſſence of matter, than that other, immateriality, can be the eſſence of ſpirit. Our ideas of ſolidity and extenſion do not include the idea of thought, neither do they include that of motion; but they exclude neither: and the arguments you draw from the diviſibility of matter againſt it's cogitability, which you deny, might be not ill employed againſt it's mobility, which you admit, as I ſuppoſe.

SECT. IX.

IT has been ſaid that this boaſted ſcience about ſoul or ſpirit has not the merit even of a good hypotheſis, tho' it pretends to be demonſtrated. You may perhaps begin to think ſo. But in order to be the more convinced of this, it may not be time miſpent to reflect, before we leave the ſubject, on the ſole means we have of acquiring any knowledge of this kind, and to conſider how far theſe means can carry us in the enquiry.

THAT all our knowledge of corporeal ſubſtance muſt be founded in the experience we have of our own, and in the experiments and obſervations we are able to make on other, bodies, will not be denied in the preſent ſtate of philoſophy. As little can it be denied that all our knowledge of ſoul or ſpirit muſt be founded, to be real, on what every man may know by intuition of his own ſoul

ſoul or ſpirit; for we cannot contemplate other ſouls, as we can other bodies. Hypotheſes may be made about either: but they muſt be made in both caſes under the ſame reſtrictions. When they are deſigned only to amuſe the mind with a ſort of analogical appearance of probability, and pretend to be nothing more than phyſical and metaphyſical romances, they are ſurely very innocent, and employ our time better at leaſt than moſt of our other amuſements do: and yet even then they muſt contain nothing that is abſolutely repugnant to the phænomena. But when they take a more ſerious air, when they pretend to be founded in ſome knowledge, and to lead to more; and, above all, when they pretend to be not ſo much hypotheſes, as demonſtrated ſyſtems; it is not enough that they be barely reconcileable to the phænomena, the phænomena muſt confirm them, or they muſt be rejected, on what authority ſoever they come recommended. Authority has been extended very far in theology and philoſophy from the time when theſe names were firſt aſſumed, and perhaps long before. PLATO having ſpoke in that pythagorical rhapſody, the Timaeus, about the viſible gods, the gods made to be ſeen, "qui tales geniti ſunt ut cernantur," that is, the celeſtial phænomena, he proceeds to ſpeak of demons, that is, of inviſible ſpiritual natures: but of theſe he confeſſes himſelf unable to ſpeak on the ſtrength of his parts, or on his own knowledge; for which reaſon he has recourſe to tradition, and to the authority of the ancients, who

who were born of gods, and knew their parents extremely well. " Priſcis itaque viris in hac re " credendum eſt, qui diis geniti parentes ſuos " optime noverint." Theſe men we muſt believe, he ſays, tho' the things they have delivered down be not confirmed by concluſive, nor even by probable, reaſons, " licet nec neceſſariis nec veriſi- " milibus rationibus eorum oratio confirmetur." On ſuch reſpectable authority did the divine PLATO vend, to his own and to future ages, all the myſterious nonſenſe that PYTHAGORAS and he had imported from the egyptian and eaſtern ſchools of theology and philoſophy. But if this might be borne in a theology that pretends to be revealed, and ought to be ſubmitted to in one that proves itſelf to be ſo, it is intolerable in philoſophy; for in all the parts of that, in the very firſt, in natural theology, human reaſon, that is common ſenſe, is the ſole judge; and the greateſt doctor has no more right to impoſe his authority on me, than I have to impoſe mine on him. I do this juſtice therefore to PLATO; I do not believe he was in earneſt when he ſet the example: tho' I believe that many great divines and metaphyſicians have been in earneſt when they have followed it.

IF men had conſulted the phænomena of their own minds alone, which can alone afford us any means of acquiring knowledge of ſpirit or thinking ſubſtance, inſtead of hearkening to ſuch idle traditions, and raiſing chimeras of their own upon

on thoſe of other men; if they had proceeded in the analytic method from particulars to generals, as far and no farther than the former juſtified the latter; it ſeems to me that they could ſcarce have imagined the ſubſtance of ſoul abſolutely diſtinct from that of body; nor have created an habitual reverence for an opinion ſo ill founded in appearances. They have purſued another method, which has brought them, after two or three thouſand years, to this paradoxical dilemma: they muſt either maintain the hypotheſis of two diſtinct ſubſtances, and explain in ſome tolerable manner, which they have not yet done, the union and mutual action on one another of unextended and extended beings; or they muſt deny the abſolute exiſtence of any thing extrinſical to the mind, and maintain that God did nothing more, when he created the world, than give a relative exiſtence to things; that is, make objects perceptible to his creatures which had exiſted eternally in the divine, and acquired then a new exiſtence in the human mind, but had no other; that he created finite ſpirits, in ſhort nothing elſe, ſpirits to perceive, but nothing to be perceived, except his eternal ideas; that there is no material world, but that the intellectual world is made perceivable by us, according to an order that God has eſtabliſhed. Was I obliged by the terrors of an inquiſition to embrace one of theſe two hypotheſes, I confeſs freely that I would embrace the laſt, ſtrange as it is, as the leaſt inconceivable in itſelf, and the moſt convenient in it's conſequences.

But

But the method taken to frame them revolts me against both.

THIS method we find recommended very emphatically in several places, and on several occasions, in the works of PLATO; and I choose to give it to you, or at least some general notion of it, according to the exposition of MARSILIUS FICINUS*, his best interpreter and commentator. First then, of bodies there are several sorts, ethereal, that is celestial; aërial, such as ghosts wear; and terrestrial, such as we wear during our lives. We cannot have experimental knowledge of the two former; and experiment and observation are not proper means of arriving at knowledge even of the latter. Corporeal objects dim the sight of the soul; to know them we must look off from them, and must not expect to discover any truth concerning them, unless we have recourse to the ideas of things, "nisi "ad ideas confugiamus." Of souls, in the next place, it is extremely hard to know the substance in this life, because we perceive it "sub "corporea specie," under a corporeal appearance, and are apt to think in a corporeal manner. The surest way therefore to comprehend it, is to proceed by moral purgation, and metaphysical abstraction. "Ideoque tutissimam rationem ad ani-"mam comprehendendam esse tum moralem "purgationem tum metaphysicam abstractio-"nem." And if all this will not do, some re-

* MARSIL. FIC. Argum. Phaed. et alibi.

velation

velation is neceſſary, "opus eſt divino quodam "verbo." One would think, however, that it ſhould do; ſince by intenſeneſs of meditation a philoſopher may abſtract himſelf from his ſenſes and his imagination, according to PLATO, and employ his mind wholly about incorporeal natures and ideas, to which it becomes united by this abſtraction; and ſince in this ſtate he alone has wiſdom and knowledge, tho' being as it were out of himſelf, "extra ſe poſitus," he is laughed at by the vulgar as a madman. You ſmile, perhaps; but reflect a little on the ſyſtems (ſo we will call them civilly for once) of ſome modern philoſophers about body as well as ſpirit, on their method of reaſoning, and on the dogmatical language they hold, upon ſubjects the moſt remote from human apprehenſion; and you will not think that I do them any wrong in comparing their manner of philoſophiſing with that of the founder of the academy, his myſterious maſters the Egyptians, or his enthuſiaſtical ſcholars the latter Platoniſts. Let us then leave thoſe, who think themſelves able to arrive at ſuperior knowledge by ſome ſuch methods as theſe, to be happy in their own imaginations; and let us rather pity than blame them, when they treat our real tho' imperfect knowledge as a chimera, and the chimeras of their own brains as real knowledge. But then let theſe purged, theſe purified, theſe illuminated ſpirits, who have a conſtant communication by ideas with the Supreme Spirit, allow us, who have none of theſe advantages, nor any con-

ception that they have them, to purſue quietly the acquiſition of a little human knowledge by human means.

We have clear and determinate ideas of what we call body by ſenſation, and of what we call ſpirit by reflection: or, to avoid cavil as much as may be without giving up common ſenſe, we have ſuch ideas by ſenſation as the various powers of that ſubſtance, called body, are ordained to produce in us; and we have ſuch ideas by reflection as the inward operations of that which we call ſpirit, be it ſubſtance or faculty, excite in us. We are able to contemplate theſe ideas naked, if I may ſay ſo, and ſtripped of the dreſs of words. How far then does the contemplation of theſe ideas carry us towards knowledge, or how high do we riſe by it in the ſcale of probability? That is the only queſtion which a reaſonable man, who is content to know as God has made him capable of knowing, will aſk. The anſwer muſt be to this effect. Philoſophers talk of matter and ſpirit, as if they had a thorough acquaintance with both, when in truth they know nothing of either beyond a few phænomena inſufficient to frame any hypotheſis. The atomical ſyſtem, which Leucippus took perhaps from other philoſophers, which Democritus took from Leucippus to improve it, and which Epicurus took from Democritus to corrupt it, has been revived with great reaſon. But yet we muſt not talk of matter as if we knew it in theſe firſt elements or principles

ciples of it, and abſtractedly from all the forms under which we perceive it. Theſe original particles, in which the nature of it conſiſts, and on which the conſtitution of it under all it's forms depends, are far beyond the reach of any analyſe we can make, of any knowledge we can acquire. Whether theſe particles be uniform and homogeneous, or whether they be of different kinds, different even in ſubſtance as well as in ſize, figure, and other circumſtances or accidents, is as much unknown to the proudeſt dogmatiſt, as to you or to me. Nay, whether many of theſe original particles may not be endued with active principles, ſuch, for inſtance, as cauſe fermentation in ſome, and coheſion in all, bodies, is a point that none of them can determine: and yet one need not ſcruple to ſay that the affirmative may be aſſumed on better grounds, than their hypotheſes are, notwithſtanding the repeated din of inert, ſenſeleſs, ſtupid, paſſive, and ſimilar epithets, which they ring in our ears whenever they ſpeak of body or matter. Their whole diſcourſe, when they go beyond a few apparent properties, whereof we are fitted to have ideas, and which have been already diſcovered, is one continued petition of principle, and grows as nauſeous, tho' not ſo mortal, as the crambe of JUVENAL.

BODY or matter is compounded and wrought into various ſyſtems before it becomes ſenſible to us. We behold ſome that are indeed inert, ſenſeleſs, ſtupid, and in appearance merely paſſive.

But we behold others that have vegetative life, juices and ſpirits that circulate and ferment in them, by which they are nouriſhed and by which they grow. They have not the power of beginning motion; but motion, which is renewed in them after it has entirely ceaſed, and both by cauſes as material as themſelves, continues in them, and they live, and move, and propagate their ſpecies; till their frame is diſſolved by age or ſickneſs, or ſome external violence. We behold others, again, that have animal life, and that go from reſt to motion, and from motion to reſt, independently of any outward cauſe that determines ſuch effects by a phyſical neceſſity in this caſe, as we obſerve to be done in the former. We diſcover, by the help of microſcopes, an immenſe variety of theſe animal ſyſtems. Where they begin, God alone their creator and ours can tell: and it would be as impertinent to aſk this queſtion, as it is to demand what "the degree "of fineneſs, or the alteration in the ſituation of "it's parts, is, at which matter may begin to "find itſelf alive and cogitative*?" They who defend ſo ill their own hypotheſes would do well to be leſs dogmatical and ſupercilious when they attack thoſe that ſeem probable to other men. Wherever theſe animal ſyſtems begin, their beginning and the principles of their compoſition are alike unknown. All we know is that they are, and all we ſuppoſe is that they are material beings, to which no Carteſian nor any philoſopher,

* Rel. of nature delin. § 9.

who

who does not deny the exiſtence of body, will, I preſume, object.

As theſe animal ſyſtems come to be more and more ſenſible to us, and as our means and opportunities of obſerving them increaſe, we diſcover in them, and according to their different ſpecies, or even among individuals of the ſame ſpecies, in ſome more, in others fewer, of the ſame appearances that denote a power of thinking in us, from the loweſt conceivable degrees of it, up to ſuch as are not far, if at all, remote from thoſe in which ſome men enjoy it. I ſay ſome men, becauſe I think it indiſputable that the diſtance between the intellectual faculties of different men is often greater, than that between the ſame faculties in ſome men and ſome other animals.

If now we are to form a general concluſion from all theſe concurrent phænomena, without any further reaſoning about them than ſuch as they juſtify, what muſt it be? It muſt be plainly this, that there is in the whole animal kind one intellectual ſpring, common to every ſpecies, but vaſtly diſtinguiſhed in it's effects; that tho' it appears to be the ſame ſpring in all, yet it ſeems to be differently tempered, and to have more elaſticity and force in ſome, and leſs in others; and that, beſides this, the apparent difference in the conſtitutions and organizations of animals ſeems to account for the different determinations of it's motion, and the ſurpriſing variety of it's effects. If the plain man, who has formed theſe

general concluſions, on particular obſervations and experiments, ſhould be aſked the trite queſtion, Whether he conceives that matter, however figured or moved, ſubtiliſed or fermented, can be pleaſure or pain, deſire or averſion? to anſwer truly, I think, he muſt anſwer, that he cannot conceive matter to be any of theſe, nor even how a ſyſtem of matter becomes capable of having any ideas, affections, or paſſions, any more than he can conceive how a multitude of other phænomena can be as he perceives evidently that they are: but that he has puſhed his enquiry as far as the true means of enquiry are open, that is, as far as the phænomena can guide him; that he cannot draw any other concluſion from them than this, that all animal ſyſtems are material; and that he muſt content himſelf with this, unleſs ſome other can be drawn from the ſame phænomena.

The philoſopher is not ſo content. If phyſics will not ſerve his purpoſe, metaphyſics and theology ſhall. "Ad ideas confugiendum eſt;" and ſince the particular phænomena of the whole animal ſyſtem lead to a concluſion he diſlikes, he reſolves not to be determined by them, but to reaſon, without regard to them, from his own abſtract ideas: and from theſe he draws a concluſion as inconceivable as that which he rejects. The plain man owns himſelf unable to explain how material ſyſtems think, tho' their phænomena are ſo many poſitive proofs that oblige him

him to conclude they have this power. The philosopher decides, negatively, on such proofs as his abstract ideas of matter furnish to him, that no system of matter thinks, that omnipotence cannot any way communicate to it the faculty of thinking; and, positively, that whatever thinks is a simple being, immaterial, indissoluble, and therefore immortal. The plain man has recourse once more to the phænomena; and objects that we must be reduced, if we receive this hypothesis, to assert that other animals, besides men, have immaterial and immortal souls; or, that no other animal, besides man, has the faculty of thinking. The immaterialist is far from contending for the first: and the materialist cannot admit the latter, in opposition to the phænomena; in opposition to which no hypothesis is admissible.

THERE seem to be but three ways to get rid of this objection. Each of them has been tried, and each of them is a different hypothesis. By one, this knot and a multitude of others are cut asunder very easily; for it consists in asserting roundly that there is no such thing as material systems, nor matter, nor any existence, out of mind eternal or created, as we have mentioned already. All observations of the phænomena, which suppose such an existence, are therefore deceptions, according to this scheme: and it would be ridiculous to attempt proving that other animals, besides men, think, to one who denies that these animals exist, or even that he and the man who

ſhould diſpute with him exiſt, in the ſenſe in which exiſtence is univerſally underſtood.

As theſe philoſophers take body from men, there are others, who not only take thought from the reſt of the animal kind, but reduce them to the ſtate of automates or machines. Whether DES CARTES advanced this paradox in good earneſt, and really doubted whether other animals had a power of thinking, or not, it is impoſſible to determine. That he ſhould be in earneſt it is hard to conceive; ſince any reaſons of doubt which he might have in this caſe, would have been reaſons of doubt in the caſe of other men, who may give more, but cannot give more evident, ſigns of thought than their fellow creatures. But we may perſuade ourſelves very eaſily that MALBRANCHE maintained the ſame paradox in very good earneſt; ſince it has a nearer and a more favorable relation to his own whimſies, and to ſome theological tenets, than is commonly obſerved. Thus, the ſame thing which happens to liars, happens often to men who ſeek the truth very ſincerely, but imagine too lightly that they have found it when they have only made an hypotheſis, and that they know things as they are, when they only gueſs how they may be; one hypotheſis wants another to ſupport it, that a third, and ſo on, till philoſophy grows to be, what it has always been, an aggregate of motley ſyſtems, partly real and partly phantaſtical.

THESE

THESE two paradoxes have not maintained much credit in the world. Men continue to be perſuaded that there are mountains and rivers, and trees and animals: and I apprehend that this vulgar notion will continue to prevail. Juſt ſo they believe ſtill that there is ſome difference between the pariſh clock, and the town bull; that the ſhepherd's dog perceives and wills as really, as the ſhepherd himſelf; and that the philoſopher's horſe knows the way to his ſtable as well, as the philoſopher knows the way to his ſtudy. They will not be ſufficient, therefore, to remove the plain man's objection: and recourſe muſt be had to the third hypotheſis, which compounds matters a little, and is a little more plauſible in appearance, but in reality leſs defenſible, than that of DES CARTES. One ſtands in direct oppoſition to the phænomena, but the other contradicts itſelf. The hypotheſis I mean, is that which aſſumes a rational ſoul in man alone, and a ſenſitive ſoul alone in all other animals,

HE who ſhould have read all that has been written on this ſubject, from ARISTOTLE down to the author of the Præ-eſtabliſhed harmony, and who ſhould have meditated ever ſo long on theſe writings, would find it a very hard taſk to give a full, and an impracticable one to give an intelligible account of what he had found there; ſo confuſed, ſo obſcure is this labyrinth of hypotheſes. I ſhall not ſet my foot far into it; for philoſophers, according to their uſual practice, have reaſoned

ſoned and diſputed in this caſe to no other purpoſe, than to render diffuſe and intricate, what lies in the narroweſt compaſs, and has really no difficulty in it, if we know where to ſtop.

In order to avoid that paradox, which ſome at leaſt of the Stoicians held, and which Gomez Pereyra and Des Cartes renewed in the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth centuries; and to maintain at the ſame time the ſuperiority of the human nature, not only in degree but in kind too, this notion of a ſenſitive ſoul has been advanced, or rather continued and enforced; for it deſcends to us from the ſame ſprings from which ſo many other abſurdities have flowed. The diſtinction between ſouls, and images of ſouls, "animae et "animarum ſimulacra," might lead to it. But there are other paſſages in Plato, that favor it more directly. Aristotle ſpoke leſs figuratively and more clearly on the ſubject, for he beſtowed ſenſation, memory, and the paſſions on other animals, and reaſon on man excluſively. On this principle the ſchoolmen and all the Peripateticians have proceeded: and it is at this hour the reigning opinion among ſound divines. There cannot be, however, a more unſound doctrine, if extreme abſurdity can render it ſo; for either they, who maintain it, ſuppoſe the ſenſitive ſoul to be a middle being between body and ſpirit, or they do not. If they ſuppoſe it ſo, they ſuppoſe it to be neither extended nor unextended, neither material nor immaterial; and we have no idea

of

of any other ſubſtance. If they do not ſuppoſe it to be ſo, they affirm, without knowing it, what they mean to deny; for they muſt admit (unleſs philoſophers have a right to contradict the inward, as well as the outward, phænomena, and intuitive, as well as, ſenſitive knowledge) that the power of thinking, that very power whereof we are conſcious, is as neceſſary to the perception of the ſlighteſt ſenſation as it is to geometrical reaſoning. There is no conceivable difference in the faculty or power: the ſole difference ariſes from the degree in which it is, or can be, exerted. It has been aſked, will you deny the power of God, to create a ſubſtance capable of ſenſation only, and not of reaſon? No man living has higher notions of the divine omnipotence, nor carries them further than I do. An argument fairly drawn from the power of God will determine me at any time, and on any occaſion; tho' it does not determine theſe men, who inſiſt ſo much upon it when they hope to make it ſerve their purpoſe by an unfair application of it. I am perſuaded that God can make material ſyſtems capable of thought, not only becauſe I muſt renounce one of the kinds of knowledge, that he has given me, and the firſt, tho' not the principal, in the order of knowing, or admit that he has done ſo; but becauſe, the original principles and many of the properties of matter being alike unknown to me, he has not ſhewn me that it implies any contradiction, to aſſert a material thinking ſubſtance. This now, which implies no contradiction,

diction, except it be with their precarious hypothetical ideas, theſe great aſſerters of the divine power deny. But, at the ſame time, they draw another argument unfairly from this very power, by aſſigning it as the cauſe of an effect, which does manifeſtly imply contradiction. It implies contradiction manifeſtly, to ſay that a ſubſtance, capable of thought by it's nature in one degree or inſtance, is by it's nature incapable of it in another. God may limit the exerciſe of this power, no doubt, in his creatures variouſly, according to their different organizations, or to the imperceptible differences that there may be in the atoms that compoſe their bodies, or by other cauſes abſolutely inconceivable. This happens to other animals: it happens to men; and the largeſt underſtanding is limited in the exerciſe of it's mental faculties. But a nature capable of ſenſation, that is of perception, that is of thought (to ſay nothing of ſpontaneous motion, of memory, nor of the paſſions) cannot be incapable of another mode of thinking, any more than finite extenſion can be capable of one figure alone, or a piece of wax, that receives the impreſſion of one ſeal, cannot receive that of another.

We may apply very juſtly to thoſe who have maintained the doctrine of ſenſitive, and rational ſouls, and to thoſe who have made new hypotheſes concerning them, as well as concerning the apparent reciprocal action of body and mind, what Bacon ſays of the Greek philoſophers, "Impetu

" Impetu tantum intellectus uſi ſunt, regulam " non adhibuerunt; ſed omnia in meditatione " acri et mentis volutatione et agitatione per- " petua poſuerunt." It muſt be confeſſed that ſome of the moderns have been guilty of this, as well as the ancients; and, I think, with leſs excuſe, becauſe experimental philoſophy has been more in uſe, and the means of acquiring knowledge of this kind have been more common, in our days. Notwithſtanding this, we have ſeen men of the greateſt name neglect ſometimes entirely, at their firſt ſetting out to enquire into the nature of things, ſpiritual or corporeal, an exact and ſufficient obſervation of the phænomena; and ſtill oftener, contenting themſelves with a tranſient view of particulars, hurry on to general knowledge, according to the natural propenſity of the human mind, without having this rule, if I may ſay ſo, in their hands; or elſe bending it to their abſtract notions, inſtead of ſquaring theſe ſcrupulouſly by it. It ſeems that the great author himſelf, whoſe cenſure I have juſt quoted, does ſomething of this kind in his fourth book of the Augmentation of ſcience, where he makes a diſtinction between rational and ſenſitive ſouls. The latter he affirms to be a material ſubſtance " plane ſubſtantia corporea cenſenda " eſt," without perceiving that this cannot be, unleſs matter can be made capable of thinking. This ſoul he aſſigns to brutes, according to the received notion. According to the ſame, he ſuppoſes the rational to be a ſuperior ſoul in men,

men, without perceiving that the ſuppoſition of theſe two ſouls as is abſurd, as that of an upper and lower part in the ſame ſimple and indiviſible being. He concludes by hinting that the ſenſitive ſoul in man may be conſidered as confounded with, and loſt in, the rational, "ipſa "anima rationalis et ſpiritus potius appellatione "quam animae indigitari poſſit," without perceiving that we may juſt as well confound the rational with the ſenſitive, as the ſenſitive with the rational, ſoul; and that, if nothing can think which is material, that which thinks in other animals muſt be immaterial; or, if any thing can think which is material, that there is no pretence to conclude that which thinks in man to be immaterial. I am afraid, therefore, that the inquiſition which he recommends in this place, and which ſeemed to him to be almoſt wanting, "quaſi deſiderari videtur," muſt have been purſued, on his principles, under the influence, not of one, but of all the four kinds of falſe ideas and notions, the "idola tribus, ſpecus, fori, et thea-"tri," which he has named, not without ſome of the affectation prevalent in his age; and which muſt in all ages render it hard for truth to enter into the mind, and be apt to diſturb the progreſs of it when it is there.

THIS hypotheſis, and the others of freſher invention, are like the armed men of CADMUS; they kill one another: not one ſurvives the reſt. Affectation of ſuperior genius and knowledge has

has decoyed men, no doubt, into theſe ſcenes of phantaſtical ideas and notions: but it muſt be confeſſed that they have been forced into them likewiſe, in ſome degree, both by intereſt, another intereſt than that of truth, and by invincible prejudice. There are certain opinions fixed by authority; an authority that deſerved no reſpect in it's original, and that could never have impoſed by itſelf, but one that cuſtom renders ſacred, and that acquires by ſubſequent authorities, and by circumſtances foreign to it, an importance in the whole, or in part, which nothing elſe could have communicated to it. My lord BACON himſelf obſerves to this purpoſe, and he might have applied the obſervation to himſelf on this, and other occaſions, that the greateſt genii have ſuffered violence in all ages, whilſt, out of regard to their own characters, they have ſubmitted to the judgment of their age, and of the populace: ſo that time like a river, has brought down light and tumid error, whilſt ſolid and weighty truth is ſunk to the bottom, and is dived for by few. Thus the notions that prevail about ſoul, ſpiritual ſubſtance, and ſpiritual operations and things, took their riſe in ſchools, where ſuch doctrines were taught, as men would be ſent to bedlam for teaching at this day. Their inward doctrine, for they had two, might be more reaſonable, perhaps: but we cannot wonder if that which was taught to a few, and which the few kept ſecret, was ſoon loſt; whilſt the outward doctrine, which was taught to whole nations, and glared

glared with ſymbols, allegories, and parables, or philoſophical fables, was preſerved. Some of theſe doctrines are come down to us: and it is probable that they have loſt nothing of their primitive extravagance in the writings of PLATO, through which they have been conveyed principally; ſince there never was a more wild or leſs conſiſtent author in proſe or verſe.

In the confuſion of phantaſtical ideas, and notions which the introduction of the Platonic philoſophy into Chriſtianity occaſioned or increaſed, as I ſhall ſhew at large hereafter and on more occaſions than one, that of a material ſoul ſeems to have prevailed at firſt; at leaſt it is certain that the moſt zealous writers for Chriſtianity maintained it, or ſuppoſed it. The notion, however, of it's immateriality was ſoon, and more generally, eſtabliſhed. PLATO, their great maſter in metaphyſical pneumatics, gave them, in his vague and figurative manner of writing, ſufficient foundation for either of theſe opinions: and the laſt ſeemed the moſt favorable to that of the immortality of the ſoul. From that time to this, whoever attacks one is ſuppoſed to attack the other, and is clamored againſt, accordingly, by every one who affects a ſtrict orthodoxy, without obſerving, or perhaps tho' he does obſerve, that the opinion of the ſoul's immateriality adds no ſtrength to that of it's immortality; nay, that by reſting it too much on the former, they weaken the latter, and build on a principle which they can never make intel-

intelligible, when they might aſſume another very intelligible and quite ſufficient for their purpoſe. Now theſe opinions being thus united, their union being confirmed by the authority of the whole Chriſtian church, and the belief of it inculcated by the proceſs of education, the ideas of immateriality and immortality become ſo intimately aſſociated in the minds of men, that many can no longer ſeparate them when they commence philoſophers; and that thoſe, who ſee, that if immateriality may be ſaid to imply immortality, it will not follow that immortality, in this caſe, implies neceſſarily immateriality, chooſe rather to keep terms with error than paſs for heterodox. Thus prejudice and intereſt conſpire to put philoſophers under a neceſſity of maintaining that the ſoul is an immaterial being, and, in order to maintain it, of inventing the moſt extravagant hypotheſes. When they have once agreed that twice two make five, they may well aſſert that twice four make ten.

THE plain man, a much better philoſopher in the true ſenſe of the word, keeps out of this confuſion; for he puſhes his enquiries no further than the phænomena lead him, nor preſumes to affirm any propoſition which is not ſuggeſted and confirmed by them. They do not lead him far in his enquiries about ſpirit, but they lead him ſurely. Corporeal nature affords men a fund of knowledge, ſuch as it is, which they can never exhauſt. We acquire our firſt ideas from thence, and by

induſtry and experiment it is in our power to acquire more, and to improve this kind of knowledge daily. How much it is ſo appears in the vaſt improvements that have been made ſince experimental philoſophy has been cultivated. The plain man will be apt to aſk why a proportionable improvement has not been made in that knowledge which is called metaphyſical? And I think he will give himſelf this plain anſwer, that men have in one caſe means in their power that are proportioned to their ends in ſome degree; and that they have them not in the other in any degree, tho' they proceed phantaſtically as if they had. That there are corporeal natures, we have ſenſitive knowledge. That there are ſpiritual natures, diſtinct from all theſe, we have no knowledge at all. We only infer that there are ſuch, becauſe we know that we think, and are not able to conceive how material ſyſtems can think. We are conſcious of certain modes of thinking, of certain faculties and operations of what we call mind, and of certain inward emotions which we aſcribe to the mind, and which we call affections and paſſions. This is ſome degree of knowledge, no doubt; and it might be improved to conduct better our underſtandings, and our lives too. But then the principles of it, the mental phænomena, are few; and, beyond thoſe that are obvious to immediate reflection, there are none to be diſcovered. There are neither microſcopes nor teleſcopes to aſſiſt our inward ſight; and neither geometry nor algebra can be of any real uſe

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in this part of natural philoſophy: whereas, in the other, the vaſt ſcene of corporeal nature, which will never be quite opened, is always opening to human induſtry. We diſcover frequently new phænomena, or we correct and improve our former obſervations: and every ſtep of this kind is an advancement of ſcience. Theſe reflections may ſerve to explain how it has come to paſs that philoſophers have made ſuch a mighty progreſs in the knowledge of corporeal nature, even within little more than a century; whereas their knowledge of ſpiritual nature is no greater now than it was three thouſand years ago, and than it will be three thouſand years hence, if the generations of men continue ſo long.

Men were conſcious, ever ſince their race exiſted, that there is an active thinking principle in their compoſition: and the firſt reflection they made, as ſoon as they began to reflect on what paſſes within them, could not fail to be this, that there is a mutual influence of body on mind which ſhews itſelf firſt, and of mind on body which appears a little later. With this knowledge men of common ſenſe have contented themſelves in all ages; whilſt philoſophers, thoſe men of uncommon ſenſe, have filled their own heads and the heads of all who have hearkened to them, in every age, with phantaſtical ideas and notions, on which they have erected hypotheſes repugnant to one another as well as to the phænomena. It would be aſtoniſhing, if it was not ſo common, to ſee

men advance hypotheſes ſometimes with no regard, and often with very little, to thoſe phænomena whereof we are able to acquire ſenſitive knowledge alone: but that they ſhould do the ſame thing in caſes, where every man has the ſame intuitive knowledge of the phænomena, might be deemed impoſſible: and yet both are true. The diſtinction between ſenſitive and rational ſouls, and the immateriality of the latter, had been long eſtabliſhed: and the ſchoolmen, who ſpun their cobwebs of philoſophy, as well as theology, out of their own brains, had ſettled moſt accurately the bounds of each, when DES CARTES aroſe: a great genius ſurely. The French, a little like the Greeks, "qui ſua tantum mirantur," affect to ſpeak of him as if he had firſt diſpelled the miſts of ancient philoſophy, and taught mankind both to enquire and to reaſon. But our VERULAM, as great a luminary as he, perhaps a greater, one more uſeful certainly in the advancement of knowledge, had appeared before him to diſpel theſe miſts and to put the clue of experiment into our hands; to deride contentious logic, and to diſtinguiſh, between phantaſtical and real, the knowledge men had, and the knowledge they wanted, in every branch of human ſcience. The Engliſh and the French ſun both had their ſpots: and if they diſpelled ſome miſts, they raiſed others. The great obligation we have to them is, that they ſet us in the way of diſcovering their errors, as they had diſcovered thoſe of other philoſophers.

DES

DES CARTES ſaw, what the ſchoolmen had not ſeen, that a ſenſitive ſoul, capable of all the functions and endued with all the faculties that they or their maſter ARISTOTLE allowed to belong to it, muſt be capable of thinking by it's nature, and therefore in every reſpect as well as theſe; and that all their diſtinctions were without differences, and mere arbitrary ſuppoſitions. If he had ſtopped here, he had defeated them, and not expoſed himſelf to be defeated in his turn. But it did not become the majeſty of his philoſophy to leave any thing unaccounted for, how deeply ſoever hid, to ſpeak like PLINY, in the majeſty of nature. He therefore aſſumed two ſubſtances, the extended and the thinking ſubſtance. But as ſoon as he had done ſo, two difficulties preſented themſelves; one ariſing from the preciſe definition he had given of the ſoul, more obviouſly at leaſt, if not more ſtrongly, than from the vague notions of the Peripateticians; and the other concerning the mutual action of mind on body, and of body on mind, ariſing as obviouſly and as ſtrongly from his, as from the common, hypotheſis; which were in effect, as to the rational ſoul, the ſame. DES CARTES, therefore, thought fit to make two other aſſumptions; one, that, ſince beaſts muſt either not think at all, or have ſouls like men, whoſe eſſence is thought, they ſhould have no ſouls at all, but be reduced to be material automates. Such he made them: and ſuch they continue among his diſciples, as far as it is neceſſary they ſhould be ſuch to make his ſyſtem

conſiſtent with that of Chriſtian divines. It is, in truth, more favorable to them than their own; for beſides other abſurdities that attend the notion of a ſenſitive ſoul, the perpetual creation and annihilation of ſo many ſouls, as all the animals and inſects of the world require, was a conſequence that formed an objection the more againſt the notion. DES CARTES ſweeped all theſe ſouls away at once, and the objection with them. The other aſſumption that this philoſopher made, by the plenitude of his power in hypotheſis, was this; that ſince he had eſtabliſhed an heterogeneity between the ſoul and the body, more abſolute than that which there ſeemed to be whilſt a ſenſitive ſoul was placed like a middle being between them, and ſince their mutual operations on one another became conſequently more inconceivable than ever, this reciprocal action ſhould be no longer admitted, however conſcious of it men might imagine themſelves to be. Volition, for inſtance, is made by this Carteſian hypotheſis the occaſional, not the efficient, cauſe of the motion of body; and the impreſſion of an outward object on our organs is made the occaſional, not the efficient, cauſe of the ſenſation that our minds perceive. God is the ſole efficient cauſe in all theſe caſes. He acts directly and immediately according to the laws on which he has eſtabliſhed this ſtrange union between ſoul and body. A ſtrange union it muſt needs be! and one would be tempted almoſt to think, that it is indifferent whether the ſoul reſides in the body it is ſuppoſed to inform, or any

where elſe; ſince, united as they are, there is no immediate intercourſe between them, nor any other than that which is carried on mediately by the Supreme Being, who is every where preſent, and may therefore be determined to act by a mind on a body, and by a body on a mind, how remote ſoever from one another. If we ſpeak with the vulgar, with whom it is more reaſonable to ſpeak and to think too, than with philoſophers, on ſome occaſions, we muſt ſay that the death of PYRRHUS was the effect of a tile falling caſually on his head. But if we ſpeak with the Carteſians, we muſt ſay that the paſſing of PYRRHUS before the old woman's window was the occaſion which determined God to make her ſee him; that on this ſecond occaſion, the ſight of him, God impreſſed a ſentiment of anger and vengeance on the old woman's ſoul; that on this third occaſion, the ſentiment of anger in the old woman's ſoul, God moved her arm to throw the tile; and that on this fourth occaſion, the falling of the tile, God broke the ſkull of this fighting king of EPIRUS. This extravagant hypotheſis would provoke laughter, if it did not provoke horror, as I think it muſt, in the mind of every ſincere theiſt*.

* SINCE there are thoſe who dogmatiſe boldly about God's manner of being, and of knowing, it is no wonder that there ſhould be thoſe who dogmatiſe alſo about his manner of cauſing, and about the œconomy of his providence in the government of the world. When they aſſume particular providences, the inſtances they bring are often ridiculous: when they ſpeak in general of occaſional cauſes, the inſtances of theſe, which force themſelves upon the mind, muſt needs raiſe horror in every man who believes a God. Theſe doctrines are imper-

THE makers of hypotheſes have not ſtopped here. LEIBNITZ aroſe after DES CARTES, and if the ſecond did not equal the firſt in real, he out-did him and every other philoſopher in phantaſtical knowledge. He rejected the old opinion, that the

tinent in their origin, and abominable in their conſequences. If DES CARTES had not made, on his clear and diſtinct ideas, and his lively inward ſentiment, ſuch definitions as could not be reconciled to the univerſal experience of mankind, he would have been under no difficulty, except that of owning his ignorance, in a caſe wherein every other philoſopher was not leſs ignorant than he. But rather than not make a new hypotheſis without a ſufficient regard to the phænomena firſt, and rather than not maintain it even againſt them afterwards, the Supreme Being was brought down, "ſicut Deus in ma-"china," to deliver this puzzled philoſopher out of the perplexity wherein he had involved himſelf. I would not think of God at all, tho' he ought to be always preſent to our thoughts; I would refuſe to acknowledge and adore him in the contemplation of his works, tho' I do it from the bottom of my heart, much ſooner than I would look on him as the immediate efficient cauſe of every ſenſation of human minds and every action of human bodies. Shall I believe that it is God who impreſſes thoſe frantic ſentiments of devotion, which an Indian idolater feels on the ſight of his idol, and who determines the body of this wretch, on the occaſion of theſe ſentiments, to fall under the wheels of the proceſſional car, and be cruſhed to death? Shall I believe that it is God who moves the arm of a parricide when he plunges a dagger into his father's heart, or that of ſome low rogue when he picks a pocket? The conſequences are horrible: and an hypotheſis that ſhould lead to them, even leſs directly than this of DES CARTES does, would deſerve to be rejected with the utmoſt indignation. Many of the moſt extravagant opinions entertained by the heathen were capable of being reconciled to an awful ſenſe of the monarchy of a Supreme Being. Such opinions as theſe cannot be ſo: and Chriſtian philoſophers and divines have done more to debaſe our notions of this Being, than all the doctors of polytheiſm.

ſoul

ſoul and body are ſo conſtituted and ſo united by God, as to influence and to act really on one another. He rejected that of the French philoſopher likewiſe, which has been juſt mentioned. He did not proſtitute the divine agency by making God the immediate efficient cauſe of every effect that body ſeems to have on mind, and mind on body, as they happen in the human ſyſtem. But he employed the divine power and wiſdom in another manner, and once for all as it were. According to him, every ſoul has a certain ſeries of perceptions, deſires, volitions, &c, every body a certain ſeries of motions, that are determined by the mechanical diſpoſitions of the machine, combined with the various impreſſions of outward objects that may be made on it. I do not enter into the difference he makes between the human ſyſtem, and the general animal ſyſtem, in which he ſuppoſes that the ſame ſouls have been united to the ſame organiſed bodies from the creation, and that theſe animals do not, properly ſpeaking, die. In the reſpect in which I quote this wonderful hypotheſis here, the caſe of all theſe ſyſtems is the ſame. In every one of them the ſoul and body do not correſpond becauſe they are united; but they are united becauſe they correſponded by a pre-eſtabliſhed harmony antecedent to their union, and in which LEIBNITZ found, no doubt, that ſufficient reaſon, which is in all caſes the reaſon that the hypotheſis requires. Soul and body are united like two tallies, that fitted one another before their union;

but

but with this difference, which makes the metaphyſical caſe the ſtronger, they were ſo fitted ſeparately and independently of one another. Bounce felt pain when ſhe was kicked, if Bounce was ever kicked: and ſo ſhe would have felt it, if ſhe had had no body at all in the ſame moment. A fair day invited you to walk in your garden; Bounce galloped after you: and ſo you both would have done, if you had had no ſouls at all. This hypotheſis gives me no horror: and every time it comes into my thoughts, I laugh as if I was at a puppet ſhew.

THAT of father MALBRANCHE muſt not be forgot in this place. It ſtands between the other two in one reſpect: it is neither ſo horrible as the firſt, nor ſo comical as the laſt. But it is, I think the ſtrongeſt inſtance that can be produced of a fine genius wrought up to a degree of madneſs by metaphyſical ſpeculation and hypothetical enthuſiaſm, unleſs the African biſhop, St. AUSTIN, may be compared with him. MALBRANCHE then ſpecifies certain manners, in which we may have ideas of outward objects; the firſt of which is agreeable to the phænomena and to the common notion derived from them, and the laſt of which is his own wild hypotheſis. He even ventures to aſſert that there is no other manner, in which we can have ideas of theſe objects. The aſſertion is a bold one; ſince it aſſumes that God cannot ordain any ſyſtem of body and mind which we cannot comprehend. On this

this foundation he proceeds to ſhew how inſufficient all the other ways are of accounting for theſe ideas, and to introduce his own. If I was to enter into a detail of particulars it would be eaſy to ſhew, with the help of Mr. Locke's examination, and even without this help, that the hypotheſis conſiſts of little elſe than words that have abſolutely no meaning, than figurative expreſſions that cannot be applied to his ſubject without the utmoſt abſurdity, than inconſiſtencies and palpable contradictions. But I believe this will appear to be no unjuſt charge, even by the very little I ſhall ſay. His hypotheſis in ſhort is this. We cannot perceive any thing that is not intimately united to our ſouls. Our ſouls are unextended beings in this place, tho' in another he ſays they have extenſion, a narrow one indeed; but, narrow or broad, it is ſtill extenſion. Now there being no proportion between the ſoul and material things, theſe cannot be united to it, nor conſequently be perceived by it. Our ſouls are indeed united to our bodies; but there is a manner of union neceſſary to perception, and another not ſo, neither of which is explained. God, who is a ſubſtance and the only intelligible ſubſtance, is intimately united to our ſouls by his preſence. He is the place of ſpirits, as ſpace is in one ſenſe the place of bodies: and ſince he muſt have in himſelf the ideas of all the beings he has created (for without theſe ideas, that is, without our manner of knowing, this philoſopher preſumes to affirm that he could not have created them) we

we may ſee theſe ideas in God, as he is pleaſed to ſhew them to us: but the good father having no where explained how God ſhews them to us, he leaves us in the ſame ignorance in which he found us. It has been obſerved that this hypotheſis bears ſome reſemblance to that of DEMOCRITUS, who aſſumed that our ideas are God. One idea, that which we have of God, is, I am ſure, by this hypotheſis, God himſelf; ſince it is affirmed that this idea is uncreated. The words are worth quoting. — "On ne peut pas "concevoir que l'idée d'un être infiniment par- "fait, qui eſt celle que nous avons de Dieu, ſoit "quelque choſe de créé." I might mention a multitude of other notions quite unintelligible, or repugnant to our cleareſt ideas, and moſt certain experience; ſuch as theſe, for inſtance, that we have the idea of infinite, before we have the idea of finite, and that we think of all being before we think of any particular being: but I have ſaid enough to ſhew, that altho' this writer has deſtroyed the intentional ſpecies of the Peripatetics, for he dwells chiefly on our ideas of ſight; yet he has left it juſt as poſſible, and vaſtly more probable, that God has ordained certain ideas in the mind, to be excited by certain motions of body in a manner incomprehenſible by us, than that we ſee theſe ideas in his ſubſtance in a manner alike incomprehenſible.

I IMAGINE that the plain man is by this time pleaſed to ſee common ſenſe force men back, after

after a tedious round of philoſophical rambles, to the very point from which he has never ſtirred: for ſo it muſt do unleſs we renounce this gift of God, in favor of human authority. The authority may be great; but the greater it is, the more ſtrongly do theſe examples of error ſhew how little the greateſt, how abſurd the wiſeſt, how ignorant the moſt learned, of men become when they preſume to puſh beyond the bounds that God has ſet to human enquiries. There is ſo much warning given, the high road to knowledge is ſo direct, and the bounds of it are ſo ſtrongly marked, that they who go out of this road, in the vain hope of paſſing them by a ſhorter way, as well as they who do not ſtop when they are conducted no longer by the phænomena, but hope that metaphyſics can carry them forward when phyſics cannot, are inexcuſable.

FONTENELLE, in the elogy he made of NEWTON before the French academy, compares DES CARTES with him. He ſays that "DES CARTES, taking a bold flight, meaned to place himſelf at the ſource of all things, and to make himſelf maſter of the firſt principles of them by ſome clear and fundamental ideas, that he might have nothing more to do, than to deſcend from thence down to the phænomena of nature, as to neceſſary conſequences." He ſays "that the other, more timid or more modeſt, ſet out leaning on the phænomena, that he might by their means remount to the unknown principles

"ciples of things, which he resolved to admit, "whatever the chain of consequences shewed "them to be. One," says he, "sets out from "what he understands clearly, to find the cause "of what he sees. The other sets out from "what he sees, to discover the cause, be it plain "or obscure." He concludes by saying "that "the evident principles of one do not always "lead him to the phænomena such as they are; "and the phænomena do not always lead the "other to principles evident enough." I have quoted this passage at length, because, as much perplexed as it is by an artful abuse of words, it will serve much better to set in a full light the truth I would inculcate, than to constitute an equality of merit in natural philosophy between Des. Cartes and Newton. I will make, therefore, a short commentary on it. The design of the former, as it is here represented, was not a bold flight, but an extravagant undertaking. It is honor enough to the latter, that he made greater advances towards the first principles of things than any of those who went before him: and this would have been honor enough for Des Cartes too, if he could have acquired it. This philosopher might have clear ideas; for ideas that are false may be very clear perceptions in the mind, and especially in the mind of one who reasoned on a certain lively inward sentiment of evidence, as well as on ideas really clear and distinct: but fundamental ideas, if there be any meaning in the word, he could have none, or none that

were

were ſufficient in the method he purſued. Many of thoſe he employed to make himſelf maſter of the firſt principles of things could be only hypothetical, ſince he did not frame them on the phænomena, nor connect them by the phænomena, according to NEWTON's method; which was not timid, but wiſe as well as modeſt. What an immenſe diſtance was there between any thing he could underſtand clearly in his method, and the cauſes of what he ſaw? And how could the intermediate ideas be framed? Nay, how does it appear that he underſtood clearly the things which he is ſaid to have underſtood ſo, and from which he ſet out, when he took extenſion alone to conſtitute the eſſence of matter, and thought alone that of ſoul? Is it not plain that his evident principles were aſſumed, as they often are, purely for the ſake of what was to follow? DES CARTES might in his method invent, as he did, whatever principles imagination ſuggeſted to him; and with the oſtentatious appearance of a complete ſyſtem ſhew us an univerſe of his own, not of God's making. NEWTON reſolved to invent none; for he reſolved to admit ſuch only as he ſhould be led to diſcover by a chain of conſequences, that carried him up to them imperfectly perhaps, but ſurely; ſuch as God made them to be, not ſuch as he gueſſed they might be. The one might, and did, fall into error. The other could only fall ſhort of the knowledge he ſought. He fell ſhort of it. Like COLUMBUS, he diſcovered a new world: and, like him, he left

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the diſcovery to be purſued by others. Our knowledge of nature can ſo little be complete, that the very appearance of a complete ſyſtem is a reaſon perhaps to ſuſpect it of being etched out by fancy. Let us ſuppoſe a philoſopher to ariſe, and to purſue the diſcoveries of NEWTON with equal ſucceſs. Let us ſuppoſe that, by dint of experiment and geometry, he confirms the doctrine of attraction or gravitation not as a property, not as an attribute, of matter, if you will, but barely as a new phænomenon; and that he diſcovers a new kind of pulſion, or ſome other phyſical cauſe of it. Attraction, which gives us now the idea of a cauſe, and which may be, notwithſtanding all the ſilly abſtract reaſoning to the contrary, a real property of matter, will give us then the idea of an effect, as this new cauſe muſt do in it's turn as ſoon as ſome further cauſe is diſcovered; and as that further cauſe muſt do likewiſe, as ſoon as ſome other ſtill more remote is brought into light. Thus we ſhall be always ſeeking, and always to ſeek. But is this to recall the occult qualities of the ſchools? FONTENELLE makes himſelf, not NEWTON, ridiculous, when he does more than inſinuate this reproach in the ſame elogy. If NEWTON's philoſophy had terminated, like that of the ſcholaſtics, in occult qualities, it would not have riſen in reputation as faſt as it was underſtood: and if that of DES CARTES had not been too often, like theirs, merely hypothetical and extravagantly ſo, it had not been demoliſhed on ſo many ſides, as faſt as it was examined.

BUT

But I return to obſerve that the compariſon between theſe two methods is to be applied to our reſearches about ſpiritual, as well as corporeal, nature; and to confirm what I have ſaid concerning them. When I conſider how little knowledge the phænomena give us of one, and that we are not able to go by their help a ſtep beyond the firſt appearances, whilſt we extend our knowledge of the other wider and carry it higher in the order of cauſes; I am ready to think that God, who leaves us in many caſes to collect his will, as he has made us able to collect it, from his works, ſhews manifeſtly in this caſe how repugnant it is to the deſigns of his all-wiſe providence, that we ſhould attempt to acquire knowledge of ſoul or ſpirit; and how conformable it is to theſe deſigns, that we ſhould employ our induſtry and penetration to acquire knowledge of body, terreſtrial and celeſtial, in order to promote in general the advantages of human life, and thoſe particularly that reſult from an adoration of the Supreme Being in a contemplation of his works.

It has been ſaid, it is a common-place topic, that infidels (for ſuch is every one called by ſome men, who does not ſubſcribe to all they advance even without proof) are deſirous to keep God at a diſtance from them, whereas they ought to conſider that it is "in him they live, and move, "and have their being." This charge cannot be laid juſtly againſt any man who believes a

God; for a God without the attributes of an all-perfect Being cannot be the Supreme Being, how inconſiſtently ſoever ſome of the ancients might reaſon about the Divinity. For my own part, I am firmly perſuaded that there is a Supreme Being, the fountain of all exiſtence, by the efficacy of whoſe will the whole univerſe was made, and is governed, as well as preſerved; in a word, who is the firſt efficient cauſe of all things, and on whom all his creatures depend. But for this very reaſon, and becauſe I have this awful ſenſe of the Supreme Being, I do not preſume to familiariſe myſelf with him, as the men who bring this charge are apt to do. That he is the firſt efficient cauſe, I acknowledge; but I am on my guard againſt thoſe who preſume to penetrate further into the machinery of the univerſe, and the order of ſecond cauſes, than the phænomena, that is, than his works, ſhed a light on their enquiries; or who are ſo bold as to deny the efficiency of ſecond cauſes, becauſe they are not able to account for them, and who employ the firſt cauſe on every occaſion, for whoſe action they are as little able to account. This is a common practice, and it has produced a ſort of profane and even blaſphemous enthuſiaſm in philoſophy. DES CARTES, LEIBNITZ, MALBRANCHE, our friend perhaps, and all thoſe, who not contented to know, what they may know in ſome degree, the things that are, make hypotheſes of what they can know in no degree, how and

and why theſe things are as they are; all theſe men, I ſay, have run into this practice, and have ſpread the enthuſiaſm.

Our enquiries into the nature of things and into their cauſes may be ſtopped in two different manners. They may be ſtopped or delayed by the difficulties that are in the way, or by the want of ſome of thoſe extraordinary genii that are ſent into the world, now and then, to penetrate into the ſecrets of nature, and to unfold them, as it were, by degrees. Few of theſe men ariſe. They are as rare as comets, or any of the leſs frequent phænomena that they obſerve: and when one of them has made a certain progreſs, if he is not interrupted in it by death, it often happens that he ſtops in his philoſophical career, as if his ſtrength were ſpent. The courſe is long as well as difficult. Relays are neceſſary, if I may ſay ſo, to carry knowledge even to the human goal: and they are not always at hand. When enquiries are thus ſtopped, and yet the progreſs that has been made ſhews that which remains to be made, other men are encouraged to proceed: lucky incidents may happen to ſhorten their labor: and the intended diſcovery may ſeem to be only delayed. This is, I ſuppoſe, the caſe of the longitude; and we cannot doubt but that it is ſo of many other objects of philoſophical enquiry.

But our progreſs is abſolutely ſtopped, inſtead

of being delayed only, in many more inſtances: and in theſe it is that all efforts are vain, and all induſtry for that reaſon impertinent. I will explain myſelf on this important point as clearly as I can. Beſides the general idea we have of an univerſal relation of cauſe and effect, between the Supreme Being and his works, all the phænomena give us particular ideas of the ſame relation. It is evidently in the ſyſtem of divine wiſdom that they ſhould do ſo; and the uſe of it in all the affairs of human life is manifeſt. Every phænomenon is a cauſe to us, when it is conſidered relatively to thoſe that appear to be the effects of it. Every phænomenon is an effect to us, when it is conſidered relatively to thoſe that appear to be the cauſes of it. Thus God has willed that things ſhould be perceived by us: and if we could diſcover the whole chain up to the firſt effects of almighty efficacy, ſuch they would appear, I preſume to us. But humanity cannot ſoar ſo high, nor approach ſo near the throne of God; tho' the Sieur DE FONTENELLE aſſures us that DES CARTES took his firſt flight thither at leaſt, ſince he directed it to the ſource and to the firſt principles of all being. As far as we can acquire ideas of the phænomena, and are able to compare them, and to proceed by induction from them, ſo far, and ſo far only, are we able to acquire the knowledge we are ſo fond of, the knowledge of cauſes, of corporeal cauſes, that I may keep to the uſual diſtinction, from the corporeal phænomena, and of ſpiritual cauſes

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from the ſpiritual phænomena. When we can acquire no more of theſe ideas, we are at the end of our line of knowledge in either kind: and as this happens ſometimes after a long proceſs of enquiry, ſo it happens ſometimes at our firſt ſetting out.

But this is not all. As our diſcoveries of the phænomena, by which we acquire ideas of ſecond cauſes, are thus variouſly limited, ſo there is another uniform and univerſal limitation of our knowledge concerning them. Whatever knowledge we acquire of apparent cauſes, we can acquire none of real cauſality: by which I mean neither mode nor modal entity, according to the jargon of the ſchools; but plainly that force, that power, that virtue, whatever it be, by which one being acts on another, and becomes a cauſe. We may call this by different names, according to the different effects of it: but to know it in it's firſt principles, to know the nature of it, would be to know as God himſelf knows; and, therefore, this will be always unknown to us in cauſes that ſeem to be moſt under our inſpection, as well as in thoſe that are the moſt remote from it. This knowledge, however, is that which philoſophers mean to attain, or it is impoſſible to ſay what they mean in many caſes, and for want of which they employ ſo familiarly the firſt efficient cauſe on every turn. They are doubly ridiculous. They ſeek and pretend to diſcover cauſes when they only ſuppoſe phænomena; and when

they have diſcovered a real actual cauſe in it's effects by the phænomena, they reject it becauſe they cannot conceive it's cauſality, nor aſſign a ſufficient reaſon why, and how, it is as it is.

If all the objections to Newton's ſyſtem were anſwered; if the facts and calculations were over and over confirmed, a diſciple of Leibnitz would ſtill maintain that there was no ſufficient reaſon for attraction as an eſſential property, or as an attribute, of matter; and that it could not, therefore, be admitted as a cauſe, how much ſoever appearances might favor ſuch an opinion; ſince nothing muſt be admitted to exiſt unleſs philoſophers are able to ſhew the ſufficient reaſon of it's exiſtence, and to explain it's cauſality. Well might attraction be exploded by theſe philoſophers, ſince extenſion itſelf run ſome riſque, and had been certainly denied to be an eſſential property of matter, if Leibnitz had not diſcovered the ſufficient reaſon of it in non-extenſion. His monades in this ſyſtem may be called immaterial atoms as properly, as he calls ſouls immaterial automates in his ſyſtem of a preeſtabliſhed harmony: and his reaſoning in both will appear intelligible to none but his implicit diſciples; as his letter to the chemiſts who ſearched for the philoſopher's ſtone at Nuremberg, which procured him admiſſion into their ſociety, was intelligible to them, tho' he did not underſtand it himſelf.

It will be agreed, I think, that, on the ſuppoſition I have made above, attraction would paſs, in every mind untouched by the delirium of metaphyſics, for a ſufficient cauſe; tho' the ſufficient reaſon of it could not be given, nor the cauſality of it be explained. Now I would aſk whether the conſcious knowledge we have of the reciprocal action of body and mind be not founded in greater certainty, than the knowledge we ſhould have of this conatus accedendi, this mutual tendency of body to body? It muſt be allowed to be ſo. I would aſk therefore, ſince he, who ſhould deny in this caſe the attracting, gravitating power to be a property of matter, would deſerve laughter inſtead of attention, as much as he did whilſt he doubted in the ſame manner of extenſion, till the ſagacious LEIBNITZ had found the ſufficient reaſon of it in non-extenſion, or rather in non-entity; I would aſk, I ſay, what he deſerves who denies the reciprocal action of mind and body, becauſe he knows no more than that there is ſuch an action, and becauſe he is unable to diſcover by what powers, and in what manner, this action is produced?

If we are conſcious that we think at all, we are conſcious that we perceive ideas, and that we will actions. We are conſcious, in one caſe, that the cauſe is without us, and the effect within us. We are equally conſcious, in the other, that the cauſe is within us, and that the effect paſſes without us. In one caſe, where we have only

a ſenſitive knowledge of the cauſe, tho' we have an intuitive knowledge of the effect, we may be deceived as to the former. The ſtick in the water may be ſtrait, tho' we perceived it crooked: and the tower at a great diſtance from us may be ſquare, tho' we perceived it round. I chooſe theſe trite examples, which have been employed by all thoſe who would perſuade us to diſtruſt our ſenſes, thoſe inlets of all our knowledge, and which prove for me, on this occaſion, better than for them on the occaſion on which they urge them. We try our perceptions over and over again; we rectify by experience the deceptions to which they are liable: and all theſe perceptions, the falſe as well as the true, confirm the opinion, if it may be called merely an opinion, that they are cauſed immediately by outward objects acting on our organs whether we will or no, in conſequence of particular principles or powers utterly unknown to us, and conformably to general laws, ſome of which we are able to diſcover. In the other caſe, where we have intuitive knowledge of the cauſe, and only ſenſitive knowledge of the effect, either we have really no knowledge at all, and our whole ſyſtem is a ſyſtem of illuſion, which it would be ſurely impious to aſſert; or we know that there is an immediate action or influence, which amounts to the ſame, of mind on body. No man in his ſenſes ever doubted, and I am therefore perſuaded that Des Cartes did not doubt, that volition, an act of the mind, determined the motion of his arms and legs when-

whenever he moved them; tho' the intereſt of his hypotheſis, which concerns all theſe men much more than that of truth, obliged him to maintain the contrary, as it obliged him to advance the other paradox mentioned above, concerning animal automates.

Thus have philoſophers in all ages amuſed mankind with ſyſtems of imaginary knowledge, raiſed on phantaſtical ideas and notions, rather than confine themſelves within the limits of real knowledge. Inſtead of fixing our opinions by evident truth, and giving the mind any ſolid foundation whereon to reſt, they have involved us in doubts, and eterniſed diſpute. Like Noctambules, they have ſtaggered about, and joſtled one another in their dreams. Since the torch of experimental philoſophy has been lighted up, theſe hypothetical reaſonings have been exploded, or elſe confined under certain conditions in all that relates to corporeal nature. But the abuſe has continued in all that relates to ſpiritual nature; and modern philoſophers, like tyrants driven out of one province, have made themſelves amends, as it were, by exerciſing a more arbitrary power in another. The exerciſe of it in this deſerves, however, to be reſtrained more, than in the former. The ſpiritual nature of our ſouls, ſuch as it is now conceived to be, ſuch as authority, and among others that of a council, obliges that it ſhould be taught, is an hypotheſis aſſumed on very precarious grounds, and in oppoſition to thoſe that are the grounds of every other allow-

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able hypotheſis. How abſurd, therefore, is it in philoſophers to aſſume on an hypotheſis much more than they would venture to aſſume on real knowledge? How abſurd is it in the reſt of mankind to give any credit to them when they do ſo?

But there is a farther objection to this proceeding, drawn from the unavoidable conſequences of it, which ſhould render it odious to every man, who will not ſacrifice the integrity of theiſm to the artifice of minds fraught with vanity, and ſtimulated by curioſity. The notion, which theſe metaphyſical reaſoners have framed about the human ſoul or ſpirit, makes them ſlide eaſily and almoſt neceſſarily into that familiarity with the father of ſpirits which has been cenſured above, into concluſions little leſs, if at all leſs, than blaſphemous. Whilſt philoſophers talked of corporeal nature logically, that is, improperly, or on ſuppoſed principles of matter and motion, that is, ignorantly, they led themſelves and others into error, but not into ſuch error. Metaphyſicians and divines have this to anſwer for. Spirit is not certainly an univocal term, tho' theſe men uſe it as ſuch. God is not a ſyſtem of matter; but he is not therefore a ſpirit, ſuch as we conceive ſpirits to be: he is not therefore united to our ſouls by an inconceivable preſence or union, nor even by any gradation of ſpirits up to him; for between him and the higheſt created being the diſtance muſt ſtill be infinite. Thus we ſhould think

think and ſpeak of God. But the men we have to do with here have accuſtomed themſelves to think in the ſame manner, and to ſpeak in the ſame ſtyle, of the divine and human ſpirit, with no other difference than that of adding infinite to the one, and finite to the other. They conceive them both to be alike immaterial beings, and ſubſtances too, as if they, or DES CARTES, who determined that there are but two ſubſtances, knew this any better than SPINOZA knew that there is but one, or than I, who believe there may be ſeveral, know how many, or what they are. It is no wonder that ſuch notions of a community, or union, of ſpirits between God and man, ſhould encourage metaphyſicians and divines to draw the Deity down to their level, as their ſeveral hypotheſes require, whilſt they affect to raiſe themſelves up to his, if I may be allowed to uſe expreſſions which are no more than proper to ſignify their attempts. They do in effect ſpiritualiſe all the groſs conceptions of ignorant and ſuperſtitious men, that is, they ſay much the ſame things in a leſs intelligible manner: and the preſence of God, according to MALBRANCHE, and according to MOSES, differs in little elſe. Beſides which, if we believe what they affirm, MALBRANCHE had in the Word, or God's eternal reaſon, an inviſible, and the high prieſt of the Jews in the tabernacle a viſible, Shechinah to interrogate.

AFTER all theſe reflections which I have thrown upon paper, as they occurred to my thoughts, and

and as the frequent interruptions to which I am expoſed would give me leave, nay, after all thoſe which they ſuggeſt, or which a man of better parts, more knowledge, and more leiſure would be able to make; I doubt not but our plain man would be told that the hypotheſes which have been mentioned deſerve much reſpect, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid againſt them; ſince they were intended to ſupport the opinion of the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul, and, by conſequence, of the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, which are the great bonds that attach men to revealed religion. This he would be told, and he would be aſked whether he preſumes to deny the truth of theſe doctrines in general; whatever he may think of ſome particular notions that philoſophers may have entertained concerning them? His anſwer might be to this effect, that it would be for the intereſt of theſe and ſeveral other doctrines, to let them reſt on the authority of revelation; that to make them matter of philoſophical ſpeculation is to make them diſputable; and that to make them diſputable, is to unfix them in the minds of men; ſince in the natural order of things, revelation may confirm what philoſophy teaches, but philoſophy can give no confirmation, nor any further authority, to what revelation has taught; and ſince, if it could do ſo in other caſes, it could not do it in theſe, where queſtions, that have been controverted in all ages among philoſophers, are concerned. He might add, that, revelation a-part, he ſaw no poſitive nor deter-

determining proof of any of theſe doctrines; that all the phænomena from our birth to our death ſeem repugnant to the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul, that he is forced to conclude with LUCRETIUS,

Gigni pariter cum corpore, et una,
Creſcere, ſentimus pariterque ſeneſcere mentem.

that God had given him reaſon to diſtinguiſh and to judge, and external and internal ſenſe by which to perceive and to reflect; but that this very reaſon ſhewed him the abſurdity of embracing an opinion concerning body and mind which neither of theſe ſenſes ſupports; that how ſhort and imperfect ſoever the knowledge acquired by obſervation of the phænomena might be, he was contented with it, becauſe it was knowledge acquired in God's way, that is, in the only way God has opened to our enquiries about the nature of things corporeal or ſpiritual: nay further, that if he could ſuſpect himſelf to be deceived in this way, he would be contented ſtill; he would conclude on this and other occaſions, that whether things appear to him as they are abſolutely, and ſuch as the Supreme Intelligence knows them to be, or not, they appear to him ſuch as it is fit for his nature that they ſhould appear to him. On this undoubted truth he would reſt his mind, inſtead of perplexing it about indeterminable queſtions, and of ſtruggling preſumptuouſly and vainly to know things

things otherwiſe than his nature and theirs admit that he ſhould know them.

On ſuch principles as theſe, tho' he could not affirm, he would not deny, the immortality of the ſoul. What indeed ſhould tempt him to do ſo? In whatever world, in whatever ſtate he is, he knows that the ſame God governs. What then has he to fear in one more than in another? Nothing ſurely, if he thinks as he ought to think of the All-perfect Being. Such God is. Let us not therefore humaniſe him. Let us not meaſure his perfections by ours, much leſs let us aſcribe to him, as every ſyſtem of theology does, under the notion of goodneſs, what would be partiality, nor under the notion of juſtice, what would be cruelty, in man. Let us not preſume ſo much as to aſcribe our perfections to him, even according to the higheſt conceptions we are able to frame of them, tho' we reject every imperfection conceivable by us, when it is imputed to him. "As "we muſt not imagine with the Anthropomor-"phites (it is MALBRANCHE * who ſpeaks well "in this place, tho' very inconſiſtently with what "he ſays in others) that God has the human "figure, becauſe it ſeems to us the moſt perfect; "we muſt not think neither that the mind of "God has human thoughts, nor that it is like "to ours, becauſe we know nothing more per-"fect than our own minds." Such theology as this, and ſurely it is orthodox, makes our plain

* Lib. iii. p. 2. c. 9.

man

man to be flattered, not terrified, with any faint appearance of immortality in proſpect, like TULLY, SENECA, and other philoſophers, who ſaw no more grounds in any thing they knew of the nature of the ſoul for this expectation, than he ſees. He is ready to ſay of this immortality, what the auditor ſays in the firſt Tuſculan diſputation, "me vero "delectat; idque primum ita eſſe velim, deinde, "etiamſi non ſit, mihi tamen perſuaderi velim."

HE might very reaſonably aſk the metaphyſical divine for what reaſon he clogs the belief of the ſoul's immortality with that of it's immateriality, ſince the former is ſufficient to anſwer all the ends of religion? The doctrine of future rewards and puniſhments (which is, no doubt, a great reſtraint on men; and which would be a greater, if it was not ſo ſcandalouſly abuſed by the ambition and avarice of prieſts) ſuppoſes the immortality of the ſoul only: and it is much more eaſy to make men conceive that it is immortal by the good pleaſure of God, tho' material, than that it is an immaterial ſpirit, and immortal by the neceſſity of it's nature, as God is ſelf-exiſtent by the neceſſity of his. One may wonder that men, who have adopted ſo many of the whimſical notions which they found in PLATO, ſhould not have borrowed a hint that they might have found there, or that they rejected perhaps when they found it. The hint I mean is that of ſouls mortal by their nature, that is, material, but ſuch as ſhould never die, "ſolubiles, ſed diſſolvendae nunquam."

"Since

" Since you are generated, you are mortal, but " you ſhall not die; for my will is ſtrong enough " to repair the defects of your nature," ſays the Supreme Being to the younger gods, the gods born of gods, in the Timaeus; and it is the leaſt abſurd thing PLATO makes him ſay or do on that occaſion. The neglect of this paſſage may be imputed to ſome theological purpoſes that ſeem to be better ſerved by the hypotheſis of immaterial ſouls, than by any other. But the vanity of the human heart, which has been flattered by divines in all ages, was to be flattered on. What ſerved beſt to this purpoſe was taken from PLATO: and how it was improved we need look no further than the Tuſculan juſt now quoted, to find. There TULLY, after a ridiculous panegyric on the human mind, which, improved by philoſophy, he thinks able to diſcover all things in heaven and on earth, all that exiſts, in it's beginning, progreſſion, and end, runs a very profane parallel between the divine and human mind. If the firſt " be air or fire, ſuch is the laſt. If there be a " fifth element, that new nature which ARIS- " TOTLE firſt introduced, it muſt be common to " both. Whatever has ſenſe, intelligence, will, " and the principles of life, is celeſtial and divine, " and therefore neceſſarily eternal." This is the nature of man: and " God himſelf cannot be " conceived any other way," than by analogy to it. That we frame our conceptions of the divine intelligence as well as we can, by analogy to our own, is true. We have no other way of framing them.

them. But it will not follow that his nature is analogous to ours, nor that ours is like his, "mens ſoluta quaedam et libera, ſegregata ab "omni concretione mortali, omnia ſentiens et "movens, ipſaque praedita motu ſempiterno." Thus abſurdly however did the diſciples of PLATO flatter human nature: and, finding in the bible that we are made after the image of God, our divines have interpreted the paſſage according to theſe prejudices. They will not ſay directly, I ſuppoſe, that our ſouls are a portion of the divine eſſence: but what they ſay ſometimes means this or nothing; and what they ſay always, is but little different from it. Strange vanity! as they aſſume themſelves to be expoſed to eternal damnation, and the reſt of mankind to be almoſt entirely damned, rather than not aſſume that their ſouls are immortal; ſo this immortality would not have charms ſufficient for them, if it was not aſſerted to be eſſential to the nature of their ſouls.

THUS, I believe, our plain man would leave the matter: and thus I leave it too; having ſaid, I hope, enough to ſhew that the fondneſs philoſophers have to raiſe hypotheſes, that cannot be raiſed on real ideas, ſuch as have a known foundation in nature, that is, a known conformity with exiſtence, is a principal occaſion, on which the mind exerciſes it's artifice in framing ſuch ideas and notions as are merely phantaſtical. That the mind exerciſes the ſame ſeveral other ways, and in ſome leſs obviouſly than in this, as it has

been hinted above, I know full well. But, enough having been ſaid to ſhew that human knowledge is imperfect and precarious in it's original, as well as ſlow and confined in it's progreſs; and, by one great example, which may ſerve inſtar omnium, that they, who pretend to guide the reaſon of mankind and to improve human knowledge, do nothing better in matters of the firſt philoſophy, than ſubſtitute that which is imaginary in the place of that which is real, or in addition to it, in favor of their prejudices, their paſſions, and their intereſts; enough has been ſaid for an eſſay concerning the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge.

ESSAY THE SECOND.

CONTAINING

SOME REFLECTIONS

On the folly and preſumption of PHILOSOPHERS, eſpecially in matters of the FIRST PHILOSOPHY;

On the riſe and progreſs of their boaſted SCIENCE;

On the propagation of ERROR and SUPERSTITION; and,

On the partial attempts that have been made to reform the abuſes of HUMAN REASON.

ESSAY

THE SECOND.

SECTION I.

HE who aſſerts that there would be more real knowledge, and more true wiſdom, among mankind, if there was leſs learning, and leſs philoſophy, may offend ſome mens ears by advancing a paradox; for ſuch at leaſt they will call it: but men who enquire without prejudice, and who dare to doubt, will ſoon diſcover that this ſeeming paradox is a moſt evident truth. They will find it ſuch in almoſt every part of human ſcience, and above all others in that which is called metaphyſical and theological. The vanity of the vaineſt men alive, of ſome who call themſelves ſcholars and philoſophers, will be hurt; but they who ſeek truth without any other regard, and who prefer, therefore, very wiſely even ignorance to error, will rejoice at every ſuch diſcovery.

THERE was a time when navigators bent themſelves obſtinately to find a paſſage by the north-eaſt or the north-weſt to Cathay. Neither frequent loſſes nor conſtant diſappointment could divert them from theſe enterpriſes, as long as the faſhionable folly prevailed. The paſſage was not found; the faſhion wore out; and the folly ceaſed.

The bounds of navigation were ſet: and ſufficient warning was both given and taken againſt any further attempts in thoſe dark and frozen regions. Many ſuch there are in the intellectual world: and many ſuch attempts have been made there with no better ſucceſs. But the conſequence has not been the ſame. Neither examples nor experience have had their effect on philoſophers, more fool-hardy than mariners: and where the former wandered to no purpoſe three thouſand years ago, they wander to no purpoſe, at leaſt to no good purpoſe, ſtill.

"Il faut pouſſer à une porte pour ſçavoir "qu'elle nous eſt cloſe," ſays CHARON ſomewhere in his book Of Wiſdom. He ſays right, "pour ſçavoir qu'elle nous eſt cloſe." But when we know, or may know very certainly, by our own experience, and by that of all the ſtrong men in philoſophy, ancients and moderns, that a door is ſhut which no human force can open, they who continue to ſweat and toil in ſhoving at it are moſt ridiculouſly employed. They who affect to gueſs at the objects they cannot ſee, and to talk as if the door ſtood wide open whilſt they peep through the key-hole, are employed ſtill worſe. The moſt ancient philoſophers may be excuſed in great meaſure for attempting to open every door of ſcience; tho' they cannot be ſo for impoſing on mankind diſcoveries they never made. But they, who followed theſe in the courſe of philoſophical generations, are inexcuſable on the firſt

firſt head, as well as the laſt; ſince what was curioſity in the others became preſumption in them: and they ſcarce made amends, by the good they did in advancing ſome real knowledge, for the hurt they did in entalling ſo much that is quite phantaſtical on poſterity.

TULLY confeſſes very frankly that nothing is ſo abſurd which ſome philoſopher or other has not ſaid: and his own works would furniſh ſufficient proofs of the aſſertion, under the epicurean, the ſtoical, and the academical characters particularly, if they were wanted. But this confeſſion does not go far enough: and we may employ upon this occaſion againſt philoſophers the objection made againſt the Jeſuits by ſome of their enemies. The abſurdities of philoſophers are not to be aſcribed to the particular men alone who broached them in every philoſophical age, but to their order and inſtitution, if I may ſay ſo; the principles and ſpirit of which lead by neceſſary conſequences to ſuch abſurdities. The firſt founders of philoſophy laid theſe principles, and inſpired this ſpirit in days of ignorance and ſuperſtition. Their followers have refined upon them, confirmed them, and added to them. Time and authority have eſtabliſhed them all; the oldeſt and the groſſeſt moſt. Words that have really no meaning are thought to have one, and are uſed accordingly. Ideas, that are really incomplete and inadequate, are deemed complete and adequate. Ideas, that are obſcure and confuſed, are deemed

clear and diſtinct. In a word, time and authority have ſo well eſtabliſhed metaphyſical and theological abſurdities, that they paſs for the firſt principles of ſcience, like certain neceſſary and ſelf-evident truths which are really ſuch. Men, who would have been giants in the human ſphere, have dwindled into pigmies by going out of it. Inſtead of heaping mountains on mountains of knowledge to ſcale the ſky, they heap mole-hills on mole-hills with great airs of importance, and boaſt ridiculouſly not only of their deſign, but of their ſucceſs. They appear to me like ſylphs, if you and ARIEL will give me leave to make the compariſon, ſo proud of not being gnomes, that they fancy themſelves archangels. "Humana "ad deos transferunt, divina mallem ad nos," is an expreſſion uſed by TULLY, and extremely applicable to the philoſophers of whom we are ſpeaking. They do moſt preſumptuouſly the firſt, and they pretend with equal folly and effrontery to do the laſt. They aſcribe to the Supreme Being the manner of knowing, the ideas, and even the very affections and paſſions, of his creatures. They preſume to enter into his counſels, and to account for the whole divine œconomy as confidently, as they would for any of their own paltry affairs. This they call theology. They build intellectual and material worlds on the hypothetical ſuggeſtions of imagination. This they call philoſophy, metaphyſical and phyſical.

BY ſuch means, and by ſuch men, truth and error

error have been intimately blended together from the firſt eſſays of philoſophical enquiry: and various ſyſtems of natural and ſupernatural theology have prevailed in different ages. Had any one of them been wholly founded in real knowledge and confined to it, as every one of them pretended to be, the certainty and the importance of ſuch a ſyſtem would have preſerved it among the rational part of mankind. Truth, pure and unmixed, would have given it ſtability. But error has kept them all in a continual flux: and, to the ſhame of the human head and heart, the moſt rational, or the moſt reaſoning, part of mankind has maintained this flux by adopting ſome errors, by inventing others, and by cultivating both.

If there is no ſubject, and I think there is none, upon which the opinions of men have varied ſo extravagantly, and have ſtood in ſuch manifeſt contradiction to one another, as they have on that of the firſt philoſophy, the reaſon is, that men have not aimed ſo much at unattainable knowledge, nor pretended ſo much to it, on any other ſubject. Folly and knavery have prevailed moſt where they ſhould be tolerated leaſt: and preſumption has been exerciſed moſt where diffidence and caution are on many accounts the moſt neceſſary.

" Quale per incertam lunam ſub luce maligna
" Eſt iter in ſilvis."

Such

Such is our journey in the acquiſition of knowledge, whenever we attempt to travel far. We grope along in thoſe paths which experience and the application of our minds open to us. We diſcern, according to our manner of perception, a few objects that lie in our way, and we gueſs at a few more. But we cannot even gueſs, with as much probability as is neceſſary to juſtify us in gueſſing, at our whole ſyſtem, nor explain the phænomena of it. How much leſs ought we to think ourſelves capable of knowing the divine ſyſtem! We have a very ſuperficial acquaintance with man. Do we hope to become better acquainted with God? One would imagine that metaphyſical divines did really entertain this hope. They may entertain it, as well as the huffing opinions, to uſe a phraſe of Mr. Locke, which they entertain concerning the human mind or ſoul. They aſſume it to be near akin to the divine, ſomething derived immediately from God, and capable of being united to him. An intellectual mirror it is, that reflects from the phænomena of nature alone, and therefore indirectly, ſome very few notices of the Supreme Being, beyond the demonſtrative knowledge that we have of his exiſtence. But theſe men, when they lower their pretenſions and would appear modeſt, aſſure it to be not a mirror that reflects ſuch notices, but a ſpirit that is capable of receiving them, and that receives them directly from the divine intelligence. They tell us, with great metaphyſical pomp of words, that reaſon, the ſupreme, eternal

eternal reaſon, is the ſun of their intellectual world, in the light of which they ſee intelligible objects, juſt as ſenſible objects are ſeen in that of the material ſun. On ſuch bold preſumptions they proceed: and whither may they not, whither have they not, been carried by them? The farther they go, the more their imaginary light fails them. But they ceaſe not to flatter themſelves: and whilſt they expect at every moment, as it were, the dawn of a new day, they fall into the ſhades of night.

" Ubi coelum condidit umbra
" JUPITER, et rebus nox abſtulit atra colorem."

Now ſince metaphyſical divines have wandered thus ſo many thouſand years in imaginary light and real darkneſs, they are not ſurely the guides we ſhould chooſe to follow. That a degree of knowledge to which I cannot attain is therefore unattainable by them, it would be impertinent to conclude. But I may conclude reaſonably and modeſtly, that a kind of knowledge, whoſe objects lie above the reach of humanity, cannot be attained by human creatures, unleſs they are aſſiſted by ſupernatural powers; which is a ſuppoſition out of the preſent caſe. I could not have diſcovered, as NEWTON did, that univerſal law of corporeal nature which he has demonſtrated. But farther than that he could go no more than I, nor diſcover that action of the firſt cauſe by which this law was impoſed on all bodies, and is maintained in them. It is the kind,

kind, not the degree, of knowledge, that is concerned, and to be compared. Let us return therefore out of this ſcene of illuſion into that of human knowledge; nor flutter, as HOBBES expreſſes himſelf, like birds at the window whilſt we remain incloſed. We may be the better contented to confine our enquiries to the limits God has preſcribed to them, ſince we may find within thoſe limits abundant matter of real uſe and ornament to employ the ſtudious labors of mankind. Experimental knowledge of body and mind is the fund our reaſon ſhould cultivate: and the firſt is a fund that philoſophers will never exhauſt. In this part, let deficiencies be noted. There are, there can be, no exceſſes: and as to the exceſſes that have been and are to be noted in the other, they are exceſſes of aſſuming and reaſoning, not of experiment and obſervation. The phænomena of the human mind are few, and on thoſe few a multitude of hypotheſes has been raiſed concerning mind in general, and ſoul and ſpirit. So that, in this part, the improvement of real knowledge muſt be made by contraction, and not by amplification. I will preſume to ſay, that if our BACON had thought and writ as freely on this as he did on many other parts of ſcience, his famous work, which has contributed ſo much, would have contributed more, to the advancement of real knowledge, and would have deſerved it's title better. Men might have learned to conſider body more, inſtead of doubting whether it exiſts, and to conſider their own minds more,

from

from which alone they can acquire any ideas at all of mind; inſtead of dreaming, like MALBRANCHE, that they interrogate the divine Logos.

WHAT right the firſt obſervers of nature and inſtructors of mankind had to the title of ſages we cannot ſay. It was due perhaps more to the ignorance of the ſcholars, than to the knowledge of the maſters. But this we may venture to affirm, that their right to that appellation could not be worſe founded, than the right of all their ſucceſſors to be called lovers of wiſdom. There is an anecdote related by TULLY in his fifth Tuſculan, and mentioned, I think, by DIOGENES LAERTIUS, which is much to our preſent purpoſe: or at leaſt the tale is pretty enough to deſerve to be told. The prince of the Phliaſians having heard and admired the Samian, aſked him what his profeſſion was. He anſwered, that he was a philoſopher, and he explained himſelf thus: He ſaid, that the life of man ſeemed to him to reſemble the great aſſembly or fair of Greece that was held at Olympia, where ſome reſorted to acquire honor by exerciſing themſelves in the public games, and others wealth by traffic; whilſt another ſort of men came for a much better reaſon, to ſee and to obſerve whatever paſſed. Thus, he ſaid, ſome men come into the world to ſeek glory, and ſome wealth; whilſt a few, deſpiſing both, obſerve and ſtudy nature: and theſe are lovers of wiſdom. We might be induced by this tale to think that PYTHAGORAS confined himſelf within

within the bounds of real knowledge, if we did not know, by a multitude of other anecdotes, and by the ſcraps of his doctrine that have come down to us, how far he rambled out of them. He had been bred in ſchools where the diſtinction between human and divine knowledge and wiſdom, to one of which we may attain, but not to the other, was ſo little made, that by aiming at the laſt they miſſed in many reſpects even the former. To obſerve the conſtitution and order of things in the phyſical and moral ſyſtems to which we belong, to form general ideas, notions, axioms, and rules on theſe particulars, and to apply them back again to human action and human uſe, conſtitutes knowledge: and the reſult of the whole is wiſdom, human knowledge and human wiſdom. But there are men, and there were ſuch in the days of Pythagoras, who talk of wiſdom as if it was not the reſult of any procedure of this kind, but a ſuperior principle antecedent to it, independent of human knowledge, and the influences whereof deſcend on the human mind from above, as Chriſtian theology teaches us that grace and faith are beſtowed on us.

According to ſuch philoſophers as theſe, men of great authority in our learned world, we muſt date the progreſs of knowledge and wiſdom from Adam, who was the wiſeſt of men, if it be no blunder to ſay ſo, before the fall, and the firſt and greateſt philoſopher after it. I will not miſſpend any time in collecting the puerilities and profa-

profanations that have fallen from the pens of rabbins, and ancient and modern doctors of the Chriſtian church. It will be enough, and in truth more than the ſubject deſerves, to take notice, that, if we give credit to theſe writers, we muſt believe that wiſdom was infuſed into the mind of ADAM by God, and that he came out of the hands of his creator with all the perfections of which his nature was ſuſceptible: and of what perfections was not that nature ſuſceptible, whilſt he enjoyed the viſion of God, and whilſt the Supreme wiſdom, that is God himſelf, "for the "Word is God," was pleaſed to converſe with him, and was delighted in his company*? He had not only innate wiſdom, but innate language too; for ADAM and EVE diſcourſed together in Hebrew as ſoon as they were created. Even after the fall, ADAM preſerved all the knowledge and wiſdom whereof he was in poſſeſſion; tho' more obſcurely than before, becauſe he had no longer the ſame immediate and intimate communication with the Supreme Intelligence. It ſhould ſeem too that he tranſmitted ſome faint glimmerings of theſe original illuminations to all his poſterity. PLATO imagined, after more ancient philoſophers, that every man is born with a certain reminiſcence, and that when we ſeem to be taught, we are only put in mind of what we knew in a former ſtate. Now who can tell how high this reminiſcence began, and through how

*—ludens in orbe terrarum; et deliciae meae eſſe cum filiis hominum. Prov. c. viii. ver. 31.

many

many former ſtates it may have been continued? Several Chriſtian divines have taught, that all men having been contained in the firſt man, ſome of his original perfection has deſcended to them, as well as the taint of his original ſin: and we may conceive one, no doubt, as eaſily as the other.

But however all this may have been, and whether ADAM preſerved after the fall his whole ſtock of knowledge and wiſdom, or whether he renewed it by experience and meditation in the courſe of a long life, the progreſs of knowledge and wiſdom is deduced by the ſame writers from him to SETH, to ENOCH, to NOAH, to the patriarchs, to MOSES, to SOLOMON, to the elders of Iſrael, to the prieſts of the family of AARON, to the colleges of the prophets, to thoſe ſanctified orders the Rechabites and the Eſſenians, and in ſhort to all the ſchools of the choſen people both before and after the captivity. Among this people we are told moſt dogmatically, that the whole treaſure of knowledge and wiſdom, as well as of true religion, was depoſited by God, that it was preſerved there, and that ſome of theſe riches were diſtributed from thence, at different periods of time, to the reſt of mankind: ſo that the people of the whole earth lighted up their candles at the lamp of the tabernacle. JOSEPH is ſometimes the ancient HERMES, MOSES the younger. Nay, JOSEPH is ſometimes the fifth MERCURY, mentioned in ſeveral traditions, who

who gave laws to the Egyptians, and taught them letters: and MOSES was the fourth, whom they thought it criminal to name on account of the plagues they had endured at the famous exode. By theſe men the light of philoſophy was ſpread in Egypt. DANIEL, ZOROBABEL, and others of the captive Jews ſpread it in Chaldaea: and SOLOMON had ſpread it, long before, among his neighbours the Phenicians, who left ſome ſparks of it in all the countries to which theſe famous navigators ſailed.

THIS account of the riſe and progreſs of philoſophy, with a multitude of other circumſtances, is ſo inconſiſtent and ſo unauthoriſed, or rather ſo groſsly fabulous, that they who give credit to it muſt firſt renounce all the conditions of hiſtorical probability. JOSEPHUS, EUSEBIUS, CLEMENT of Alexandria, and others, both Jews and Chriſtians, laid the foundations of the whole legend, and dreſſed up different parts of it. Modern ſcholars, like BOCHART, HUET, STILLINGFLEET, and many more, have taken a great deal of ridiculous pains to ſupport it. I ſhall not enter at this time into any particulars concerning the proofs they bring. I will only ſay, that, by the ſame methods, it will not be difficult to make antiquity depoſe juſt as we pleaſe. If we affirm, as it is done in the preſent caſe, without even any ſeeming authority; if we connect at other times broken, and ſupply imperfect, paſſages by gueſs; and if we paraphraſe ſuch as

are obſcure, till we make them ſay what there is no reaſon, but the reaſon of our ſcheme, to believe they were intended to ſay; in ſhort, and to mention no more of theſe learned artifices, if we adopt ſuch anecdotes as ſuit our purpoſe, and reject ſuch as are not favorable to it, tho' derived from the ſame or equivalent authority, no hiſtorical paradox will want ſufficient color to make it paſs for truth, at leaſt among thoſe who have, as the writers above-mentioned had, ſome favorite purpoſe to ſerve by it.

THAT arts and ſciences travelled from the eaſt to the weſt, from Chaldaea to Egypt, and from Egypt to Greece, has been a received opinion:

"Tradidit Aegyptis Babylon, Aegyptus Achivis."

This opinion agrees ſo well with our ſcripture account of the re-peopling the world after the deluge, and of the antiquity of nations, that it ought to be retained perhaps for that very reaſon. Two writers of more fame than good authority, but who are principally depended upon by modern antiquarians, ſeem to have thought ſo. JOSEPHUS relates that ABRAHAM was enriched by the immenſe preſents the Egyptians made him for inſtructing them in the ſciences that he brought from Chaldaea. EUSEBIUS aſſures us, from the ſame JOSEPHUS, that the Egyptians were ignorant of aſtrology and even of arithmetic; and, from EUPOLEMUS, that ABRAHAM converſed, whilſt he was in their country, with the prieſts

of

of Heliopolis. But notwithſtanding all the authorities on which this received opinion is founded, a man of ingenuity and much reading would not find it hard to eſtabliſh another, by a new choice of paſſages, and by a new diſpoſition of them; for the learned ring different changes on the ſame ſet of bells. He might ſhew us, perhaps, that arts and ſciences came from the weſt in a more remote ages than any the Greeks had knowledge of; that they were introduced and ſpread by the atlantic people, who over-run Africa and Europe, and of whom SOLON had never heard till the Egyptian prieſts related theſe wonders to him; or he might bring them perhaps from the kingdom of Uranus, that kingdom to which ATLAS, co-eval with SATURN and his brother, according to DIODORUS SICULUS, gave his name; if in truth the people of that kingdom were different from the others who bore the ſame name: which point of criticiſm it might be more difficult than important to ſettle, ſince in all caſes arts and ſciences would ſtill have been brought from the weſt to the eaſt. After this, it would be eaſy to tranſport them from Aethiopia, the African Aethiopia, or Egypt, to more eaſtern nations, to the Phenicians, the Aſſyrians, the Perſians, the Indians, and the Chineſe.

SECT. II.

BUT to dwell no longer on theſe ſerious trifles, let us conſider whether the riſe and progreſs of philoſophy, eſpecially of the firſt, may not be accounted for with a probability that is founded on the general tenor of tradition, and on the analogy with what we know of nations that have grown up from barbarity to civility, and from ignorance to knowledge.

I THINK then, on both theſe foundations, that philoſophy neither had, nor could have, in the ordinary courſe of things, a ſtated beginning at any point of time, nor in any particular place. It began, at different periods, in different places, and was ſubject to all the revolutions that attend the human ſtate. It was the growth of ſome countries, it was propagated into others. It flouriſhed long in ſome countries, it languiſhed and was ſoon at an end in others. It thrived more or leſs, it lived and died, according to the characters of people and the fortune of governments. Wherever it began, the beginnings of it were inconſiderable: for the trees which compoſe the grove of knowledge ſhoot up from the ſmalleſt ſeeds. Nor was this all. The imperfections of our nature, which have manifeſted themſelves in the whole progreſs of philoſophy, manifeſted themſelves no doubt even more groſsly at the riſe of it, tho' ignorance concealed them at that time, as knowledge has diſguiſed them ſince.

Ignorance

Ignorance preceded knowledge. Error was coeval, and grew up with it. Error flouriſhes in ſhades: and before men could get out of thoſe which ignorance ſpread, error had outgrown and overſhadowed knowledge. Superſtition accompanied them: and tho' error was the principal nurſe, even knowledge contributed to rear this child of ignorance and fear.

It is agreeable to ancient traditions, and modern relations, to believe that wild uncivilized people, tho' reduced into ſocieties ſubject to ſome regulations of government, and directed by ſome general rules which conſtant experience forces them to obſerve, have few means and little leiſure to improve even in that knowledge, the foundations of which are already laid by urgent neceſſity among them, and which would render their ſtate, if it was improved, much more comfortable. Their whole time is employed, the whole attention of their minds is bent, to provide from day to day, and from ſeaſon to ſeaſon, for their ſuſtenance: and the exerciſe of reaſon appears as little in them, as in the beaſts they ſometimes hunt, and by whom they are ſometimes hunted. Arts lie uninvented or unimproved, and ſcience they have not. But the firſt openings to ſcience, and the firſt motive to philoſophical enquiries, they have even in the ſtate I deſcribe: and this motive ſhews itſelf in that curioſity to know the cauſes of the phenomena, which is ſo natural to the human mind. The

moſt common excite it: thoſe that are extraordinary excite it more; and thoſe, from which they receive much benefit or much hurt, excite it moſt of all. Another principle, as natural to the human mind, but not very apt to direct our enquiries right, is that whereby we make ourſelves the meaſure, as well as the final cauſe, of all things. It is this that has repreſented the unknown cauſes of the ordinary, as well as extraordinary, of the beneficial, as well as hurtful, phenomena of nature, to the minds of ſuch ſavages and demi-ſavages as we deſcribe, under the images of animal beings, a little different from man, but analogous to him, and endued only with greater power and greater intelligence. Theſe they placed above or below, according to the different ſcenes of action to which imagination aſſigned them; like the captain above and the captain below, the two divinities of the Hottentots. Thus the heaven, the earth, the ſea, and the air were ſoon peopled with divinities that directed all their motions, and directed them all relatively to man. Unable to diſcover the order of ſecond cauſes, to trace thoſe that are remote from thoſe that lie neareſt to our obſervation, and thoſe that are more general from thoſe that are leſs ſo, which would have led them at laſt to the firſt efficient cauſe of all things, they took a ſhorter and eaſier method of accounting for appearances, by aſcribing every one to ſome particular efficient cauſe. Thus they made gods as many as they wanted: and, having once made them,

them, it became equally unneceſſary to look after intermediate, and impious to ſuppoſe any ſuperior, cauſes. It thundered: JUPITER was angry. It lightened: he darted one of his fiery bolts at ſome devoted head. What would curioſity deſire more to know*?

* IF ignorance and fear were the two firſt ſources from which polytheiſm and idolatry aroſe, flattery was in proceſs of time another; or that which was gratitude originally, degenerated into flattery. Men who had been honored for the good they did during their lives, or admired for their great actions, were adored after their deaths*. This cuſtom was extended ſo far, that in ſome countries † not only public benefactors and heroes and kings were deified, but every private man worſhipped thoſe to whom he had been particularly obliged ‡. Thus it was that the Egyptians came to have whole dynaſties of gods and of demi-gods §. The fame of OSIRIS, whenever he lived, had been great: and the veneration of his ſubjects for him was ſuch, that they gave his name to their gods, or aſcribed the names of their gods to him. Some have imagined, and among them Sir J. MARSHAM, if I remember right, that his whole family and his whole court had their ſhare of divine honors ‖: that as his ſiſter, who was his wife too, followed him to heaven under the name of ISIS, ſo the preſident of his council became the god of arts and eloquence, under the name of MERCURY: and the general of his troops was the patron of magnanimity and military virtue, under that of HERCULES: nay, that his brother and his ſons were no more forgot by the prieſts, than BUSIRIS and

* CIC. de nat. deor. l. ii.

† Aethiopia. vid. STRAB. l. xvii.

‡ Hic eſt vetuſtiſſimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus aſcribantur. PLIN. l. ii.

§ Suſcepit autem vita hominum conſuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in coelum fama ac voluntate tollerent. Hinc HERCULES, hinc CASTOR et POLLUX, &c. CIC. De nat. deor. l. ii.

Hac arte POLLUX, et vagus HERCULES
Innixus arces attigit igneas. HOR.

‖ Quamobrem major coelitum populus etiam quam hominum intelligi poteſt, cum ſinguli quoque ex ſemetipſis totidem deos faciant, Junones, genioſque adoptando ſibi. PLIN. ubi ſupra.

I MIGHT illuſtrate what has been ſaid by numerous examples, if I affected, what I eſteem

ANTÆUS, the governors of two of his provinces, have been by the poets. SESOSTRIS furniſhed the ſame matter to fables, many generations afterwards: and learned men think that ſeveral of thoſe in HOMER may be traced up to this famous expedition. Theſe deifications gave occaſion to the hymns that were made and ſung, not only as parts of divine worſhip, but as neceſſary means to preſerve the memory of great events. TULLY ſays ſomewhere, that the funeral orations in uſe at Rome had corrupted hiſtory; becauſe hiſtorians, in the dearth of materials, had taken ſuch as they found in thoſe rhetorical panegyrics. How much more muſt ſuch hymns have corrupted both hiſtory and religion? The ſimplicity of true theiſm could never ſubſiſt in the figures of poetry. Affected inſpiration paſſed for real, hyperboles were underſtood literally, and the machinery of an ode was taken for matter of fact.

MEN grew fonder of polytheiſm by another cuſtom that prevailed. Every ſect framed a new liſt of gods, or gave new names to ancient divinities: and altho' in ſome places temples were opened to the whole rabble of the ſky, yet in others the gods ſeemed to be reduced to a ſmaller number, and every nation was fond to have it believed that the deities they worſhipped belonged in a peculiar manner to their country and to them. The birth of BACCHUS, for inſtance, had been claimed by ſeveral nations of Aſia and Africa, when ORPHEUS applied to the ſon of SEMELE the fables he had learned in Egypt concerning another BACCHUS, and inſtituted, in honor of this new divinity, the orgia and religious ceremonies he had ſeen practiſed in honor of others more ancient, of the ſame name and profeſſion, if I may uſe the term. It would be impoſſible to enumerate, not only all the different gods, but even all thoſe that were worſhipped under the ſame appellation; for VARRO, I think, reckoned at leaſt three hundred JUPITERS.

BUT before I leave this head, I will mention very ſhortly one or two ways more, by which theſe ſuperſtitions received increaſe, ſince they occur readily to my memory. Miſtake and

very

very little, particular and critical knowledge of the anecdotes of antiquity. It is enough for me

involuntary error was one, involuntary in the generality, tho' often impoſed, ſometimes helped, and always connived at, by the pious frauds of the prieſthood. The Legend of Dodona related, that two black doves took their flight from the Egyptian Thebes, one into Lybia, the other into Greece; that the firſt ordered the temple of JUPITER HAMMON to be founded, and that the latter, perching on a tree at Dodona, and ſpeaking in the human voice, declared it to be in the fates that another oracle of JUPITER ſhould be eſtabliſhed there. The fact was atteſted by all that belonged to the temple, and the miracle paſſed currently. But the prieſts of the Theban JUPITER, who had no intereſt in this particular ſuperſtition, and with whom HERODOTUS converſed when he was in Egypt, explained the blunder and the fraud to him. Some Phenician rovers, it ſeems, had carried off two prieſteſſes, and ſold one into Lybia, and the other into Greece, where they ſet up oracles on the model of that which was in their own country. BOCHART has ſhewn how affinity of ſounds, which gave occaſion to the Greek poets to call the prieſts doves, might give occaſion to this fable: and Sir J. MARSHAM cites a paſſage in HOMER, where doves are ſaid to carry ambroſia to JUPITER. Let me ſay, by the way, that BOCHART might have learned from hence how precarious a foundation for conjecture ſimilitude of ſound is, on which, however, many of his conjectures reſt principally.

THAT I may compare this ancient, with a modern, inſtance of impudent fraud and fooliſh credulity, let me mention, among many, one that prevails at this time even in France. It is believed then in that country by devout perſons, that ſome holy man had formerly a revelation in a viſion or a dream, directing a monaſtery to be built and founded in a particular field, which was ſhewn to him. The good man publiſhed this revelation: a bigot age believed him: the monaſtery was founded, and a new order of lazy drones was added to the church. Their firſt and all their other monaſteries were richly endowed: and they continue to this day under a name that marks their ſuppoſed divine inſtitution, the name of Premontré.

to

to have read and conſidered them ſo far, as to ſee ſome general truths that reſult from them. I proceed, therefore, in the ſame manner to obſerve that many ancient traditions might induce one to think that the unity of God was the original belief of mankind, and that polytheiſm and idolatry were the corruptions of this orthodox

IF ſuch groſs lies could be impoſed, if plain matters of fact could be thus perverted to foment ſuperſtition, what errors muſt have ariſen, to have the ſame effect, from the uſe of hieroglyphics, ſymbols, and allegories, wherein phyſical and moral philoſophy were delivered down to poſterity? If naked truth, paſſing thro' many hands, came to be diſguiſed, what muſt have happened to truth wearing a maſk at her firſt appearance? The hieroglyphic and the ſymbol remained, and the fable continued in tradition, when the ſignification of the one, and the moral of the other, were forgot. Books which treat of ancient mythology, furniſh many inſtances of this kind. I will mention two out of DIODORUS SICULUS, as examples of another way, whereby ſuperſtitious opinions and practices increaſed among the heathens. PALLAS was a virgin, born out of the head of JUPITER. She was a goddeſs, famous in many reſpects; and we ſee of what conſequence her ſtatue was in the Trojan war [a]. Now the ancient naturaliſts meaned to expreſs, by this daughter of JUPITER, nothing more than the air, uncorrupted, and holding the ſublimer place among the elements. Thus again, as the Romans carried the eagle, ſo the Egyptians carried the images of divers beaſts, in their enſigns [b]. Theſe images, which were preſerved only as monuments of their triumphs, came in time to be adored as authors of their victories. The dog, which ANUBIS, and the wolf which MACEDON, wore on their ſhields or on their helmets, after having been long honored as emblems of theſe demi-gods, came to be gods themſelves. From ſome ſuch originals might proceed many other monſtrous objects of adoration,

qualia demens
Aegyptus portenta colit. JUV.

[a] DIOD. SIC. lib. i. [b] Ib. lib. ii.

faith. CUDWORTH ſeemed to me to have eſtabliſhed this opinion on as good foundations as any opinions of this ſort can reſt: and I own that I once very much inclined to it. But when it is conſidered more cloſely, and without prepoſſeſſion, I apprehend that it can be ſupported neither by ſacred, nor by profane, authority.

NOT by ſacred; becauſe the moſaic account is plainly inconſiſtent with itſelf, as it ſtands in the books we have under the name of MOSES. Not by profane; becauſe thoſe anecdotes are quite unfavorable to this opinion, and becauſe every probable reaſon, that can be drawn from the conſtitution of human nature, and from the ordinary proceſs of the human mind, ſtands in direct contradiction to it.

METHUSALEM, it is ſaid, ſaw both ADAM and NOAH, to both of whom God revealed himſelf in his unity. SHEM, the ſon of NOAH, lived even to the days of ABRAHAM. Need I ſtay to ſhew how impoſſible it is for any man in his ſenſes to believe that a tradition, derived from God himſelf through ſo few generations, was loſt among the greateſt part of mankind; or that polytheiſm and idolatry were eſtabliſhed on the ruins of it in the days of SERUG, before thoſe of ABRAHAM, and ſo ſoon after the deluge? I ſhould think it impoſſible even for the Jews themſelves, who ſwallow ſo many fables and ſo many anachroniſms. Since the unity of God was not univerſally taught in thoſe early days,

days, it was not ſo revealed, nor preſerved in the manner aſſumed.

If the inconſiſtency of this account makes us reject it, we ſhall find leſs reaſon to believe, on the authority of profane traditions, that the unity of God was the primitive faith of mankind. Revelations to the father and to the reſtorer of the whole human race might have eſtabliſhed this faith univerſally: but without revelation it could not be that even of any one people, till obſervation and meditation, till a full and vigorous exerciſe of reaſon made it ſuch. By conſidering the phaenomena ſeparately, men could not arrive at a knowledge of the one Supreme Being: and ſuch men, as we ſpeak of, were not capable of taking an entire view of the harmony of the whole.

Writers are apt to talk of general conſent, as if it proved in all caſes that opinions ſo conſented to have a real conformity, and bear a real proportion, to the univerſal reaſon of mankind. Thus in Tully there are ſome attempts to prove the truth of polytheiſm. Thus a modern philoſopher and divine* attempts to prove that the belief of inviſible ſpirits, employed in directing the affairs of this viſible world, is founded in natural inſtinct, and the evidence of reaſon. It would be eaſy to ſhew, in a multitude of inſtances, that, if this poſtulatum be admitted, things manifeſtly falſe muſt paſs often for true, and things demon-

* Thomassin, Met. d'étudier &c. la philoſ.

ſtrated

ſtrated true, for falſe. Even the exiſtence of a firſt intelligent cauſe, the very unity of God, of which we are ſpeaking, muſt be owned to want this pretended criterion of truth. But if univerſal conſent be not neceſſary to eſtabliſh this demonſtrated truth, how much leſs neceſſary is it that this ſhould have been the primitive belief of mankind? Polytheiſm and idolatry are repugnant to right reaſon, that is, to the concluſions that reaſon draws from ſufficient information, and from the combinations and compariſons of real, not phantaſtic, ideas and notions. But polytheiſm and idolatry have ſo cloſe a connection with the few ſuperficial and ill-verified ideas and notions of rude ignorant men, and with the affections of their minds, that one of them could not fail to be their firſt religious principle, nor the other their firſt religious practice.

THERE is ſo little profane authority for aſſerting the contrary, that, if the paſſages produced to prove it were more direct, and more numerous and uniform than they are, they would not prove it to any one, who gives as little credit to our very beſt ſyſtems of ancient chronology as they deſerve. Suppoſe it clearly proved by ſome of theſe paſſages in any one inſtance, that the unity of God was the primitive belief; the term primitive will be equivocal, and the proof precarious. For how ſhall we be aſſured that we ſee clearly in the midſt of chronological darkneſs, which is always thickeſt the further we go back, that

that this orthodox faith was not preceded among the ſame people by polytheiſm and idolatry, as we ſhall certainly find that it was ſucceeded by them? The whole world appears, as ſoon as we come into hiſtorical light, over-run with them. The vulgar embrace them eaſily, even after the true doctrine of a divine unity has been taught and received, as we may learn from the example of the Iſraelites: and ſuperſtitions grow apace, and ſpread wide, even in thoſe countries where Chriſtianity has been eſtabliſhed, and is daily taught; as we may learn from the examples of the Roman churches, to ſay nothing of the reformed, who are leſs liable to the objection. But ſtill it remains true that the belief of one Supreme Being may be eſtabliſhed on the ruins of polytheiſm and idolatry. In fact it hath been ſo, in hiſtorical ages. Why ſhould it not have been ſo in that dark age, which preceded even the fabulous age, according to VARRO's diſtribution of them? In the Theban dynaſty, the Supreme Being was piouſly adored under the name of KNEPH: and the people of it were ſo far from any idolatrous worſhip, that they refuſed on this account, as rigid Jews or Chriſtians might have done, to contribute to a tax raiſed in Egypt, and applied to repair the temples, the images, or pictures, and other inſtruments of idolatry. Now the Theban was the moſt ancient dynaſty of Egypt; and the Egyptians were the moſt ancient people of the world: the firſt men therefore were unitarians, not polytheiſts. But how can this

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concluſion ſtand, when the premiſes neither have been, nor can be, proved; when there may have been dynaſties more ancient than this, or various revolutions of religion in this very dynaſty; and when I have much more reaſon to believe, on the reaſon of the thing and on a general analogy to what has happened in other countries, that the firſt men were polytheiſts, than any ſcholar has, on the precarious authority of a broken tradition or two, to pronounce them orthodox on this article of their faith? In ſhort, there is, I think, no ſufficient grounds, on which to believe that natural theology was taught in its purity firſt, and corrupted afterwards: whereas reaſon and obſervation both make it probable that it has fared with the firſt philoſophy, as with every other part of ſcience, that is, much error has been mingled ſometimes with a little knowledge, and eſpecially in the beginnings of men's inquiries into nature; and that, at other times, in the progreſs of theſe inquiries, where any progreſs has been made, more or leſs knowledge has been acquired with a leſs proportion of error. Conſcious of human weakneſs and dependency, men have acknowledged in the infancy of philoſophy, and even before the birth of it, power and intelligence ſuperior to their own, ſuch as made the world, or ſuch at leaſt as governs it. This was knowledge. But error grew up with it. They adored the viſible objects that ſtruck their ſenſes, or at beſt the inviſible beings that they aſſumed to reſide in them. The rational, the orthodox belief,

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the firſt true principle of all theology, was not eſtabliſhed, nor could be ſo, till the manhood of philoſophy.

THE progreſs of this manhood was every where ſlow, and in ſome countries none appears to have been ever made. On the contrary, men continued from age to age in the ſame ſtate, which may be properly called a ſtate of natural error and ſuperſtition. Such nations, like changelings or naturals, may be ſaid to have been children to their death. But in others, this progreſs was made, and favorable combinations of circumſtances helped to quicken it, in ſome more, in ſome leſs; but in all much more to the improvement of uſeful arts, and of other ſciences, particularly of government, than to the inveſtigation of truths concerning the firſt philoſophy. We read, with a juſt admiration, the accounts that are come down to us, ſhort and imperfect as they are, of the wiſdom and policy of ancient nations, of the eaſtern empires; and particularly, in HERODOTUS and DIODORUS SICULUS, of the Egyptian government. All the arts and ſciences were carried far among them, ſeveral much farther than we are able to imitate: and if we judge of their improvements in other ſciences, as we may fairly do, by thoſe which they made in aſtronomy, we ſhall find reaſon to be of opinion that theſe ſunk, inſtead of riſing, in the hands of the Greeks, notwithſtanding their boaſts, and thoſe of PLATO particularly, that they improved all they learned; as we ſee that

that the knowledge of the true ſolar ſyſtem was loſt ſoon after the days of PYTHAGORAS, and made way for the falſe one of PTOLEMY. But when we conſider the ſtate of natural theology among the ſame nations, and at the ſame time, we admire no longer; we remain aſtoniſhed that men, who excelled in every other branch of knowledge, ſhould embrace ſo many abſurd errors in this, and deduce from their philoſophy a ſyſtem of religion, that rendered them a proverb even among polytheiſts and idolaters. To give a full account of this, would be to give an hiſtory of the progreſs of the firſt philoſophy. I ſhall touch the principal heads as ſhortly as I can: and indeed the greateſt ſcholars, when they pretend to do much more, to enter into a detail of particulars, and to treat this ſubject minutely, involve themſelves and their readers in webs of hypotheſes one generally as improbable as another, and none of them of any real uſe. They ſhew much learning, as it is called, and often much ſubtilty: and this is all they ſhew that deſerves any commendation, if even this deſerves it. I refer you therefore to them, if you are deſirous to ſee more particulars than you will find here, concerning the riſe and early progreſs of Pagan theology and worſhip.

AMONG people immerſed in ignorance and ſuperſtition, there aroſe in ancient days, as there have done ſince, ſome men of more genius than the common herd, and that were placed in ſituations and circumſtances, which gave them per-

haps opportunities of receiving inſtruction from others, or at leaſt better means of obſerving nature themſelves, and more leiſure for the inveſtigation of truth, and for the improvement of knowledge. Theſe men were the firſt miſſionaries, and I ſuppoſe the beſt, that have been ſeen in the world. They aſſembled little families, clans or hords, into larger and more civiliſed communities: they invented many uſeful arts of life: they eſtabliſhed order and good government: and they taught men the great leſſon of promoting the happineſs of individuals by promoting that of the public, and of preſerving liberty by ſubjection to law. Theſe legiſlators, however, had been bred in the ſuperſtitious opinions and practices of their families and countries: and for that reaſon one may incline to think that they preſerved a tang of this ſuperſtition in their legiſlative capacity; ſince it is much more rare to ſee men ſhake off entirely long habits of error, than to ſee them riſe out of mere ignorance to certain degrees of knowledge. On this ſuppoſition, it would be obvious to account for the ſuperſtitious opinions and practices which they propagated and rendered venerable in all the governments they eſtabliſhed. But a reflection preſents itſelf immediately, which lets us into a ſecret, and perhaps a truer, motive that they had to hold this conduct. They might be neither bigots to old ſuperſtitions, nor to thoſe that they ſuperinduced themſelves. They could not believe that they had a correſpondence, which they knew they had not,

not, with gods or demons, even if they believed the existence of such imaginary beings: and yet they all pretended to this great prerogative. The Egyptian wisdom, their religious and civil institutions, were taught by MERCURY: and their first legislators and philosophers assumed the name, or had it given them, on this account. ZOROASTER and ZAMOLXIS, one among the Bactrians, and the other among the Scythians, had revelations from VESTA. MINOS had them from JUPITER himself, and CHARONDAS from SATURN. NUMA conversed familiarly with AEGERIA, and PYTHAGORAS with MINERVA. I need mention no more, for I will not offend by adding MOSES to this catalogue.

Now since these men imposed revelations they knew to be false, we may conclude they were not much in earnest about several of the doctrines they taught, and of the institutions they made; not even about a doctrine, which most, and I believe all, of them were extremely solicitous to inculcate, I mean the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. They endeavoured to profit of the general disposition to apprehend superior powers, in some of whom superstition had accustomed men to imagine a severity of justice, and even an inclination to afflict and torment: and they knew enough of the human heart, to know that men would be flattered with immortality in any shape, and tho' the consequence of it might be their own damnation. Religion, in the

hands of theſe philoſophical legiſlators, who ſucceeded to the authority of fathers of families, was a proper expedient to enforce obedience to political regimen: and neither the doctrines of it, nor the rites and ceremonies and manners of worſhip, could be too groſs for thoſe who had believed and practiſed many other ſuperſtitions in the days of ſtill greater ſimplicity and ignorance, and whilſt they were under paternal government. I can eaſily perſuade myſelf, for I think it not only poſſible but probable, that many of theſe reformers had diſcovered the exiſtence of one Supreme Being, which cannot long eſcape the knowledge of thoſe who obſerve the whole face of nature. But this knowledge, and the conſequences they ſhould be able to deduce from it, might not ſeem to them ſufficiently adapted to the character of the people with whom they had to do; a people led by their ſenſes, and by the firſt appearances of things, with little uſe of reaſon, and little exerciſe of reflection, which might have rendered them capable of riſing from ſenſible to intelligible objects.

NATURAL theology, pure and unmixed, it might be thought, would ſpeak in vain to a multitude, in whom appetites and prepoſſeſſions, affections and paſſions, raiſed by ſenſible objects, were ſtrong, and the force of reaſon ſmall. It was neceſſary, therefore, in the opinion of theſe miſſionaries of good policy and good manners, and, in order to promote them both, of religion likewiſe,

likewiſe, to ſuit their doctrines to ſuch groſs conceptions, and to raiſe ſuch affections and paſſions by human images, and by objects that made ſtrong impreſſions on ſenſe, as might be oppoſed with ſucceſs to ſuch as were raiſed by human images, and by ſenſible objects too, and were deſtructive of order, and pernicious to ſociety. "That true ſelf-love and ſocial are the ſame," as you have expreſſed a maxim I have always thought moſt undeniably evident; or that the author of nature has ſo conſtituted the human ſyſtem, that they coincide in it, may be eaſily demonſtrated to any one, who is able to compare a very few clear and determinate ideas. But it will not follow that he to whom this demonſtration is made, nor even he who makes it, ſhall regulate his conduct according to it, nor reduce to practice what is true in ſpeculation. We are ſo made, that a leſs immediate good will determine the generality of mankind, in oppoſition to one that is much greater even according to our own meaſure of things, but more remote: and an agreeable momentary ſenſation will be preferred to any laſting and real advantage which reaſon alone can hold out to us, and reflection alone can make us perceive. Philoſophy may teach us to do voluntarily, as I have read that ARISTOTLE ſays it does, what others are conſtrained to do by force. But the many were not philoſophers; and therefore the few might think very plauſibly, that fear was neceſſary to make them act as ſuch. The influence of reaſon is ſlow and calm, that of

the paſſions ſudden and violent. Reaſon therefore might ſuggeſt the art that ſerved to turn the paſſions on her ſide.

THO' I think that they who inſtituted religions in the Pagan world were not convinced of the truth of their own doctrines, and that their ſole view was to add, by this political expedient, divine to human authority, and the ſanction of revelation to the dictates of right reaſon; yet am I perſuaded that many of them believed the exiſtence of one Supreme Being, the fountain of all exiſtence, as I ſaid juſt now. They believed farther, the anecdotes of antiquity make it plain that they did, the exiſtence of many inferior beings; generated, not ungenerated, gods and demons. They erected, as it were, a divine monarchy on the ruins of a divine ariſtocracy; and in this reſpect, as well as many others, they refined, whilſt they improved in knowledge, out of the abſurdities of original ſuperſtition, into one that was a little leſs abſurd, and that came nearer truth, or diſguiſed error under more plauſible appearances. But all theſe refinements, at leaſt as ſoon as the diſtinction of a public and a ſecret doctrine was made, whenever that was made, became parts of their hidden doctrine, which was communicated to the initiated alone. Their outward doctrine differed not from that of the vulgar, it was the ſame: or rather, the ſuperſtition they found eſtabliſhed by cuſtom and habit, and that which they ſuperinduced by inſtitution, compoſed one monſtrous

monstrous system of ridiculous polytheism and nauseous idolatry. Thus I imagine that the first philosophy, of which I am to speak principally in this essay, took it's rise among the sons of men; and was sometimes purged and improved, as every other part of philosophy was, in certain places, and rendered more abominable in others.

I DO not intend to make the apology of those, who destroyed the true principles of natural theology by adopting old, and inventing new, superstitions, in order to enforce submission to government, and the practice of morality. I say only, the first reformers of mankind are not without excuse on this head. Great authorities may be cited, ancient and modern, Pagan and Christian; some for imposing things untrue, some for concealing things true, and some for doing both, in matters of religion. But a much better excuse, and such a one as divines particularly will have no good grace in rejecting, may be urged in their favor; and, if nothing can justify, this will at least alleviate, their guilt.

THIS was their case: they found mankind immersed in superstition, and accustomed to licentiousness. To cure them of the latter, they made their profit of the former. They reduced various superstitions, that were taken up by chance, as every man's imagination suggested them to him, and without design, into systems; and they directed these systems, in doctrine and

practice, to the purpoſe of reforming the manners of the half ſavage people whom they civiliſed, and to the improvement of ſocial life under the influence of law. Appeals to the reaſon of unreaſonable men would have had little effect: and they had no power to force inward conviction, any more than outward profeſſion. They employed therefore the only expedient, as bad a one as it was, that they had, ſufficient to force both; the dread of ſuperior power, maintained and cultivated by ſuperſtition, and applied by policy.

WHAT now was the caſe of the famous legiſlator MOSES? Some excuſe for the former will reſult, I think, from this compariſon. When God remembered his covenant with ABRAHAM, an abſurd expreſſion, but very theological, the deſcendants of ABRAHAM had forgot their God. They were become Egyptians, that is, they were attached to the country, and ſtill more attached to all the ſuperſtitions of it. They were conſtrained by miracles to abandon one; but no miracles, no interpoſitions of providence, could oblige them to abandon the other. God was forced, therefore, to indulge them in ſeveral ſuperſtitious prejudices, as learned divines ſcruple not to affirm; and in fact it appears that a great part of the ritual obſervances and laws of the Egyptians and of the Iſraelites were the ſame, or ſo near alike, as to leave no doubt of their having one common origin. This even HERMAN WITZIUS cannot deny. He allows

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that there was a great and wonderful conformity between them, "magnam atque mirandam con-"venientiam in religionis negotio:" and therefore he would perſuade, if he could, againſt the plaineſt evidence that antiquity can furniſh on any ſubject, that the Egyptians borrowed theſe inſtitutions from the Iſraelites, the maſters from their ſcholars and their ſlaves: which would not mend the matter neither extremely, if it could be ſhewn, as he attempted very weakly to ſhew it, againſt MARSHAM and SPENCER.

BUT you will aſk, and a reaſonable queſtion it will be, why was God forced to indulge his people in theſe ſuperſtitions? The divine has his anſwer ready: Becauſe it becomes Infinite Wiſdom to do nothing by extraordinary and ſupernatural means, which may be done by ordinary and natural; and becauſe wiſe governors compound, as it were, often with obſtinacy, and indulge men in ſome prejudices, that they may draw them off the more effectually from others *. For theſe weighty

* THUS it is divines account for the many Egyptian rites that were preſerved in the Moſaical inſtitution, by aſſuming that God ordered it ſo out of indulgence to his choſen people, who were ſtrongly attached to the religion and manners of Egypt, and in order to reconcile them to his law, by a little mixture of ſuperſtition in the ceremonious part of it. Let another aſſumption, made on the ſame principle, and more preſumptuous, if that be poſſible, than the former, be mentioned. It is this: That ſincere, pious, and learned man Mr. WHISTON ſuppoſes, in his New theory of the earth, that the ſun, moon, and ſtars were made before the ſix days work of the creation began; tho' they are ſaid to have been made at the ſame time, according to the obvious ſenſe of the words of MOSES. They

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reaſons, the God of truth choſe to indulge error; and ſuited his inſtitutions to the taſte of the age, "ad ſeculi guſtum et uſum," ſays SPENCER. For theſe weighty reaſons, he would not enlighten the underſtandings, ſoften the hearts, nor determine the wills, of his choſen people; tho' he had hardened the heart of PHARAOH a little before againſt the ſtrongeſt manifeſtations of almighty power;

are ſaid then firſt to be, or to be made, only becauſe they became firſt conſpicuous then, and their bodies diſtinctly viſible, as in a clear day or night they now appear to us, according to Mr. WHISTON. The point is delicate: and therefore the good man thought himſelf obliged to account, as well as he could, for this apparent, and I fear real, difference between MOSES and him. He ſays, in the firſt place, that MOSES wrote in this manner, becauſe it was neceſſary to ſecure the Jews from the adoration of the hoſt of heaven. There was no other way to apply a fitting remedy to that prevailing cuſtom. The worſhip of terreſtrial things was demonſtrated, by this account of their original, to be fooliſh and abſurd; but that of the celeſtial bodies would have ſeemed permitted at leaſt, if they too had not been included in the ſame relation. He ſays, in the next place, that we ought to look on the moſaic hiſtory of the creation, as on a journal of the appearances of things, ſuch an one as an honeſt and obſerving ſpectator on the earth would have made, and have believed true, tho' it was not agreeable to the reality of things. Now to the firſt of theſe bold aſſumptions there lies a moſt cruel objection, of which Mr. WHISTON takes no notice. If MOSES had told the Jews, that the celeſtial bodies were created beings, as well as our earth, tho' created before, even long before it, they would have believed him as ſoon, and have been as effectually armed againſt idolatrous worſhip, by a true repreſentation, as they believed him, and were thus armed by an untrue one. Another objection indeed Mr. WHISTON ſuppoſes might be made to him, and he anſwers it plauſibly enough; for tho' there might be no ſpectator to obſerve and record what paſſed, yet if the nature of the hiſtory required it, MOSES might very

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which is, I preſume, as extraordinary and ſupernatural an operation, as that of ſoftening the heart to yield to ſuch manifeſtations. We may carry this farther. God contented himſelf, according to theſe bold judges of the principles and views of his proceedings, to take ordinary and natural means in a caſe to which they were not adequate, as he muſt have known in his preſcience that they would not be, and as we know by the hiſtory of

properly repreſent things as they would have appeared to any ſuch ſpectator who had been preſent. But Mr. WHISTON immediately deſtroys the force, ſuch as it is, of his own anſwer. "To ſpeak my mind freely," ſays he, "I believe that the "Meſſias was there actually preſent, that he made the jour-"nal, that he delivered it after to MOSES on mount Sinai, "and that from thence it appears in the front of his penta-"teuch at this day." It is no longer MOSES then who repreſents things untruly, but ſuch as they would have appeared to an honeſt ignorant ſpectator. It is the Meſſias who repreſents them untruly to MOSES, and deceives others deliberately, for he could not be deceived himſelf, to prevent by this fallacy an evil, that would have been prevented juſt as well by the truth. Whatever rank Mr. WHISTON is pleaſed to allow the Meſſias, he ſhould have reſpected this divine perſon enough, not to impute to him a falſe journal, made for an unneceſſary purpoſe. But this he does: whilſt other divines impute to the Supreme Being an indulgence to the ſuperſtitious prejudices and habits of the Iſraelites, tho' reaſon as well as experience ſhews that theſe means, which they aſſume that infinite wiſdom employed, were in no ſort proportionable to the end which they aſſume that the ſame wiſdom propoſed. Theſe are the profane effects of theological preſumption. I would ſooner be reputed, nay, I would ſooner be, a pagan than a Chriſtian, or an atheiſt than a theiſt; if to be one or the other it was neceſſary to believe ſuch abſurdities as theſe, which however diſguiſed, and ſoftened by a certain cant of expreſſion, are directly profane, and indirectly, or by conſequence at leaſt, blaſphemous.

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theſe people that they were not; their whole hiſtory being a continued ſeries of difficult converſions from idolatry, and eaſy relapſes to it. By this compariſon it appears then already that Moses, who pretended to be directed and authoriſed by God himſelf, indulged the Iſraelites in many favorite ſuperſtitions: as profane legiſlators indulged the people with whom they had to do.

But, ſince I am got thus far into this ſubject, allow me to take a ſtep or two more, and to raiſe from the dead one of thoſe ancient ſages, who gave laws to heathen nations, and inſtituted religions among them. Let me ſuppoſe that one of our learned divines ſummed up the accuſation againſt him and his brethren, and contradiſtinguiſhed them from the legiſlator of the Hebrew people, thus. Notwithſtanding the conformity between ſome ritual laws and obſervances of this people, and of the Egyptians, and the frequent apoſtaſies of the former, the knowledge of the one true God was preſerved among them by the Moſaic diſpenſation, whilſt polytheiſm and idolatry overſpread the reſt of the world. Thus the great deſign of God was effected; and thus the whole œconomy of divine providence is juſtified. Would the ancient ſage be left without any reply? I think not.

He might inſiſt, in his own excuſe, that Moses, like profane lawgivers, did not only indulge the people in ſome favorite habitual ſuperſtitions, but in others of his own inſtitution; and that

that his predilection for all theſe, over the real duties of natural religion, made him inflict more ſevere penalties on thoſe who violated the former, than on thoſe who violated the latter*. He might inſiſt that among the ſuperſtitions of Moſaic inſtitution there was one, which could be charged neither on the Egyptian, nor any other heathen nation, and which ſurpaſſed the moſt extravagant of theirs. Beſides the gods, which may be ſaid to have been as it were in common, a local tutelary divinity was aſſumed by every city or nation, and was diſtinguiſhed and appropriated by a particular appellation. This ſuperſtition he would aſſert that MOSES imitated, and abuſed and aggravated by his imitation. Tho' polytheiſm and idolatry overſpread the world, might he ſay, the exiſtence of the monad, or the unity of the one Supreme Being, was not unknown to many of us. We could not teach this doctrine with ſucceſs to the vulgar, uncapable of conceiving things purely intellectual; but we taught it to thoſe who were initiated into our myſteries: and if we did not propoſe the true God as an object of public and popular adoration, neither did we bring the notions of him down to the low and groſs conceptions of the multitude, nor expoſe the majeſty of this awful Being

* Proclive eſt obſervare, Deum cuilibet legi rituali, manu elata, hoc eſt proterve et ex præmeditato violatæ, ſupplicium extremum ſtatuiſſe; quum tamen peccatis ſua natura gravioribus, fornicationi, furto, proximi mutilationi, et ejuſmodi, pœnas longe mitiores irrogavit. SPEN. lib. i. c. 1.

to

to their profanations. This Moses did. He would not conſent to take upon him the commiſſion he was appointed to execute, nor go to the children of Iſrael, till he was able to tell them the name of the God who ſent him. In compliance with his importunity and with the prejudices of the people to whom he was ſent, God is ſaid to have given himſelf a name, a very magnificent one indeed, and ſuch an one as might denote the Supreme Being; but ſtill a name, by which he was to be diſtinguiſhed as the tutelary God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, of one family firſt, and then of one nation particularly, and almoſt excluſively of all others.

OUR ancient ſage might add, that the leaſt part of the miracles wrought among the Iſraelites, with ſo much profuſion, and in a continued ſeries of divine interpoſitions, would have been more than ſufficient to draw any other nation, nay all the nations of the earth, from polytheiſm and idolatry. That, in this caſe, neither he nor any other legiſlator would have found it difficult, by propagating the belief and worſhip of the true God, to civiliſe ſavage people, without having recourſe to the expedient they employed. That as they were in a caſe very different, they deſerve excuſe and pity, rather than blame, for promoting natural religion and good government at the expence of true theology. But that Moses deſerves neither excuſe nor pity, ſince he choſe to make uſe of ſuperſtitions which he did not want,

nay

nay which defeated, inſtead of ſecuring his intent; if his intent was to deſtroy idolatry by the means of them: for the ſage would inſiſt, with great appearance of reaſon, firſt, that the true God was made known to the Iſraelites by ſuch manifeſtations of himſelf to them, and that his law was promulgated in ſo ſolemn and awful a manner, if there is any truth in the Jewiſh traditions, as to leave no pretence for adding any thing to confirm the knowledge or to enforce the law. He would inſiſt, in the next place, that if the apoſtaſies of the Iſraelites, after ſuch manifeſtations and declarations of the one true God, can be any way accounted for, it muſt be by the effect of the very expedient which our divines pretend that infinite wiſdom employed to prevent theſe apoſtaſies. He would conclude, in ſhort, that MOSES and the heathen legiſlators employed the ſame means, with this difference, that theſe means were better proportioned to their end, than to his; ſince they deſigned to govern mankind by ſuperſtition; and he meaned, or, as divines preſume to tell us, God meaned, to deſtroy idolatry by indulgence to the very ſuperſtitions out of which it grew. Upon the whole matter, whether the firſt ſages are entirely excuſable or not, their proceeding was much more reaſonable, than that which was followed by the order, and under the immediate direction, of God himſelf, as theſe eunomians, who affect to underſtand the whole ſecret of the divine œconomy, and to

know God as well as he knows himſelf, have the boldneſs to aſſert.

THO' I have ſaid thus much in excuſe for thoſe who were the firſt to eſtabliſh religion and government; I ſhall not attempt any excuſe for thoſe who ſucceeded them, and who cultivated error and ſuperſtition on a principle of private ambition. This might be the caſe ſometimes, and to ſome degree, among the moſt ſavage people in ancient days, as we ſee that it is in our own age among the wild nations of America and Africa, who have their conjurers and their diviners, and who practiſe certain fooliſh rites under their direction. It was more ſo, no doubt, when little ſtates began to be formed by aſſemblages of a few roving families, that fixed themſelves in ſocieties under the conduct of ſome leader of their own, or of ſome foreign legiſlator; the memory of which events has been preſerved in the fabulous traditions that are come down to us concerning ORPHEUS and others: for a certain concurrence of fabulous traditions may hold out with ſufficient evidence ſome general truths. But we have, if I miſtake not, in the ſtory of PYTHAGORAS, an example of error and ſuperſtition, propagated on a motive of private ambition, that is more circumſtantial and better vouched.

PYTHAGORAS came into Italy with great advantages for effecting his purpoſes. He came

among Greeks divided into many little ſtates, under very unſettled governments. He came with great reputation of learning and wiſdom and ſanctity, from a nation renowned for it's antiquity, for civil policy, and for divine myſtery; from a nation from whom the firſt rudiments of civility and even the uſe of letters had been imported into Greece, the mother country of all theſe little ſtates. He had a figure, for even that has been thought worthy of mention, to inſpire reſpect to thoſe who were to be taken by the eye. He had eloquence, to lead thoſe who were to be led by the ear: and his miracles (for miracles are eaſily impoſed on people ignorant or ſuperſtitious, and the people PYTHAGORAS had to do with were both) made him eaſily paſs for the pythian or hyperborean APOLLO, for one of the genii that were ſuppoſed to inhabit the moon, or for a celeſtial divinity.

HE opened his ſchool and began his miſſion at Crotona, where his orations to the old men, to the young men, to the women, and to the children, and much more the miracle of fiſh, which JAMBLICHUS relates ſo circumſtantially, gained him admittance and eſtabliſhed his credit. As his firſt ſchool or college, ſo his firſt church, was founded here. I may call it by that name, after CLEMENT of Alexandria: and may obſerve, after that father likewiſe, a conformity between the Pythagorean and Chriſtian inſtitutions in this reſpect. Perſons of all ages and ſexes, who were

converted by the miracles and ſermons of PYTHAGORAS, reſorted to this church. They were inſtructed in the public doctrines of his religion, and in thoſe divine truths, which they were to believe firſt, in hopes of underſtanding them afterwards; which is the very method that St. AUSTIN in ſome part of his works preſcribes to Chriſtian converts. Some few, and ſuch alone as he judged proper after a long and ſevere probation, like that he had gone through himſelf in Egypt, and from which neither the recommendations of POLYCRATES nor the favor of AMASIS could exempt him, were admitted into his college, that became a ſeminary of enthuſiaſts. They lived there like Cenobites; members of this ſpiritual family, renouncing their own, and throwing their whole ſubſtance into the common ſtock. Their long ſilence, their abſtinence, their ſelf-denial, their purifications, their auſterities, and the torments to which they ſubmitted, prepared them for any trials, to which they could be poſſibly expoſed in the propagation of their maſter's ſpiritual empire.

IN ſuch an age, and with ſuch miniſters as theſe, men devoted to him, and ready to be martyrs for him, he could not have failed to ſucceed among a people, who were already prepared by the errors and ſuperſtitions of their former inſtitutions for any, that the ſcheme of his ambition could render it neceſſary to impoſe. But he and his diſciples ſhewed this ſcheme too groſsly, and too

too ſoon: for, notwithſtanding all the fine things that are ſaid of this famous perſon by PORPHYRY, JAMBLICHUS, and other writers, and notwithſtanding all the obſcurity and imperfection of traditions concerning theſe Grecian colonies, it ſeems apparent enough that the accuſations of CYLO and NINO were not void of truth; nor the jealouſy, that prevailed, groundleſs. PYTHAGORAS cauſed revolutions in ſeveral cities, in Crotona, in Sybaris, in Catana, for inſtance: and his diſciples, ſuch as ZALEUCUS and CHARONDAS, if in truth they were his diſciples, aſſumed, wherever they came, the part of legiſlators, whether called to it or not; as if it had been a right belonging to this religious ſociety to give laws not only to their own, but to the civil ſociety that admitted them likewiſe. Such too, we may believe, they pretended it was, ſince they all pretended to be divinely inſpired: and divine inſpiration, as well as divine inſtitution, implies an authority far ſuperior to any that is merely human. DIOGENES LAERTIUS hints that the Crotonians killed him for fear of being reduced under tyranny by him: and ſome traditions ſay, that commanding the army of the Agrigentines againſt the Syracuſians he was beat, and killed in the purſuit.

IN all caſes, the declaration he was reported to have made, that he had rather be a bull for one day, than an ox always, was underſtood; and the bull periſhed. Almoſt all his diſciples periſhed with him; and the expulſion of this ſect out of

Italy may be properly enough compared to that of Chriſtianity out of Japan. The effect was not ſo entire in the former as in the latter inſtance; ſince the philoſophy of PYTHAGORAS continued to be taught in Italy by ARISTAEUS and others, who took warning, and affected government no longer; but who thought too, or pretended to think, that the gods would be diſpleaſed if they ſuffered ſo divine an inſtitution to be extinguiſhed.

THE ſame ſpirit, and the ſame apprehenſions did not prevail in Egypt, and the great Eaſtern kingdoms: for which reaſon I perſuade myſelf that their eccleſiaſtical and civil conſtitutions grew up together, and that people, who ſubmitted to kingly, might ſubmit the more eaſily to prieſtly, government; becauſe the prieſts, who had uſed to lead them by ſuperſtition, had acted in concert with their kings to make theſe eſtabliſhments. Kings wanted their influence over the people; the people wanted their influence over kings: and kings and people were both ſilly enough to imagine that they wanted ſuch a protection from the gods, and ſuch an intercourſe with heaven, as theſe prophets, and ſeers, and magicians, and prieſts, for we may jumble them all together, could alone procure.

SECT.

SECT. III*.

AS beneficial as theſe men had been whilſt they ſtood diſtinguiſhed by knowledge and wiſdom, or by pretenſions to them, not by rank; as

* I HAVE ſometimes thought, and ſaid perhaps in our converſations, that the life of mankind may be compared aptly enough to that of every individual, in reſpect to the acquiſition of ſcience. There is in both a ſtate of infancy, of adoleſcence, of manhood, and of dotage, to be obſerved. The ideas of infancy are taken ſuperficially from the firſt appearances of things to the ſenſes. They are ill compared, ill aſſociated, and compounded into notions for the moſt part either trifling or abſurd. In adoleſcence, ideas increaſe and grow a little better determined. Experience and obſervation compare and compound them better. In manhood, the judgment is ripened, the underſtanding formed, the errors of former ſtates are aſſumed to be corrected, and the farther progreſs of ſcience to be more ſure. Thus it ſhould be, no doubt. But affections and paſſions multiply, and gather ſtrength, in the whole courſe of this progreſs. What is gained one way, is loſt another; and if real knowledge increaſes, real error mixes and increaſes with it. Fancy may not impoſe, as it did perhaps, but it may incline ſtrongly to error: and authority and cuſtom will do the reſt. They will invert the whole order of ſcience. Ignorant ages and ignorant nations will impoſe on the moſt knowing: and even in the ſame age and nation, infancy impoſes on adoleſcence, and adoleſcence on manhood, till the great round is finiſhed, and the philoſopher who began a child ends a child.

LET this be applied principally to knowledge in the firſt philoſophy. Arts of all kinds, and many other ſciences, have been improved not ſo much by building on old, as by laying new foundations; not ſo much by aſſuming implicitly principles either ancient or modern, as by examining all, and adopting, or rejecting, or inventing without any regard to authority. The very reverſe of this proceeding has been practiſed in matters of the firſt philoſophy; and the profeſſors of it at this

individuals, not as members of a particular order; they became hurtful in many reſpects when they compoſed a community within a community, had a ſeparate intereſt, and by conſequence a ſeparate policy. I pretend not to conſider how their power encroached on that of the ſtate, and became independent on it, nor how their wealth increaſed to the impoveriſhment of all other orders. We may gueſs at the ancient by what we know of the modern clergy, and may be allowed to wonder that in thoſe days, as well as in our own, it has been found ſo hard to diſcover that, tho' civil government cannot ſubſiſt ſo well without religion, religion may ſubſiſt, and flouriſh too, without eccleſiaſtical government. It will be enough for my purpoſe to obſerve, to what a degree of wealth and power this order aroſe in the nations we ſpeak of, and to ſhew how it propagated error in philoſophy, and ſuperſtition in religion.

As to the firſt then, the reverend magi in Perſia had the province of teaching princes how to govern, and of aſſiſting their pupils in government afterwards. It was much the ſame in Egypt,

hour, in the mature age of philoſophy, do little more very often, than repeat the babblings of it's infancy, and the ſallies of it's youth. Theſe men are more properly ancient philoſophers, than thoſe whom they call ſo. They live indeed in the mature age of philoſophy. But in this age, whenever metaphyſics and theology are concerned, they ſeem to ruſh forward into a ſtate of dotage, and affect to hold the language that the firſt philoſophy held in Oriental, Egyptian, and Grecian ſchools, before ſhe had learned to ſpeak plain.

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where the prieſts had a peculiar right to admoniſh and to reprove, indirectly at leaſt, the kings. In Aethiopia, this prerogative was carried farther: for there the kings were ordered to die whenever the prieſts thought fit, till a ſacrilegious king, ERGAMENES, I think, aroſe, broke into the ſacred college, and put theſe ghoſtly tyrants themſelves to death. This did not happen neither till the bloody inquiſition had been long in poſſeſſion of this power, if ERGAMENES lived about the time of the ſecond PTOLEMY. The wealth and the immunities of this order were as exorbitant as the authority and power. We learn from DIODORUS the Sicilian, not only that this order had raiſed itſelf to a partnerſhip in the ſovereignty, but to an exemption from all impoſitions and burdens; for the members of it were "participes "imperii, cunctis oneribus immunes," and they had alſo one third of the whole property of Egypt. As to their immunities, there is an aſtoniſhing inſtance in the book of Geneſis. The miſerable people were obliged in a great famine to ſell their lands to the king for bread. But the king gave bread to the prieſts: they eat their fill, and kept their lands.

To ſpeak now of the manner, in which, and the reaſons, for which, this order of men propagated error in philoſophy, and ſuperſtition in religion, let it be conſidered how neceſſary it was for them to maintain that reputation of ſanctity, knowledge, and wiſdom, on which this eſteem and

reverence had been founded. They had provided themſelves many ſupports in the form and conſtitution of the Egyptian and other governments; but they ſaw at the ſame time, like able men, how neceſſary it was to continue in force and vigor the original principles of the empire they had over the minds of men, on which all the reſt depended. The general ſcheme of their policy, therefore, ſeems to have been this. They built their whole ſyſtem of philoſophy on the ſuperſtitious opinions and practices that had prevailed in days of the greateſt ignorance: and, by conſequence, their principal object was falſe, not real, ſcience. Real ſcience would have diſcovered their fallacies in a multitude of inſtances: and it would have ſerved their chief purpoſe effectually in none, if they had left it unſophiſticated. Beſides, men began to riſe, as TULLY expreſſes himſelf, "à "neceſſariis ad elegantiora." They might therefore have been overtaken by ſome, who were not of their order, in real, or have been detected in phantaſtical, ſcience. It was fit therefore that they ſhould guard againſt both theſe accidents: and they did ſo with much cunning. They multiplied and exaggerated their pretenſions to ſuch kinds of knowledge as every man was conſcious to himſelf that he could not acquire, and yet as every man was prepared to believe, according to the prejudices of the age, that they had acquired by traditions derived from ancient ſages, or even by divine illuminations, and a correſpondence ſeveral ways carried on with gods and demons,

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But ſtill they did not reſt their ſecurity even on this alone. They had other expedients, and they employed them artfully and ſucceſsfully. Moſt of their doctrines were wrapped up in the myſterious veil of allegory. Moſt of them were propagated in the myſterious cypher of ſacred dialects, of ſacerdotal letters, and of hieroglyphical characters: and the uſeful diſtinction of an outward and inward doctrine was invented, one for the vulgar, and one for the initiated; that is, one for thoſe to whom it was uſeleſs or dangerous to truſt their ſecret; and one for thoſe, the ability, credulity, or enthuſiaſm of whom they had ſufficiently tried by a long noviciate. Among the firſt, allegory paſſed for a literal relation of facts, and hyperbole was the common ſtyle. Among the laſt, all was fraud or folly. We ſee enough of the firſt in the Old teſtament to make both probable. Much in this manner I think that the corruption of the firſt philoſophy was eſtabliſhed in Egypt and the Eaſt, from whence it ſpread to diſtant countries and diſtant ages, after it became a trade in the hands of men, in whom the characters of philoſophers and prieſts were confounded.

It would be tedious and uſeleſs to deſcend into many particulars concerning the various ſyſtems of polytheiſm and idolatry. Let us content ourſelves with making ſome few obſervations that may point out the propagation of error in natural theology, as it deſcended from the Egyptians

and other nations to the Greeks. To be particular about the riſe of it would be ridiculous affectation. It aroſe long before the men, who appear to us to have been the firſt teachers of it, exiſted. PHERECYDES of Syros, who writ in proſe, and philoſophiſed out of verſe and ſong the firſt among the Greeks, was the maſter of PYTHAGORAS and THALES, who founded the italic and ionic ſects, and lived therefore later than the fiftieth olympiad. HOMER and HESIOD lived indeed before the inſtitution of the olympiads, and perhaps much about the ſame time; tho' TULLY, or CATO*, places your blind man long before the other.

BUT I am far from thinking that HOMER meant his Iliad and Odyſſey ſhould paſs for philoſophical poems, tho' it has been the madneſs of pedants, almoſt from his own age to ours, to extol him and cenſure him as a philoſopher. He meant to flatter his countrymen, by recording the feats of their anceſtors, the valor of ſome, and the prudence of others; and he employed for the machinery of his poem the theology of his age, as TASSO and MILTON have employed that of theirs. Had ARNOBIUS, and much more ſuch a weak philoſopher as JUSTIN, or ſuch a warm rhetor as TERTULLIAN, lived in our days, you would have been attacked in your turn, and have been made the father of roſicruſianiſm, and of all the ſilly doctrines about ſylphs and gnomes,

* CIC. De ſenect.

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juſt as reaſonably as HOMER has been attacked, by the zeal of Chriſtian writers, for teaching polytheiſm and idolatry. I believe too that you would have been as well defended by your commentator, by his interpretations of your allegories, and by his explanations of the hidden ſenſe of the Rape of the Lock, for inſtance, as HOMER was by thoſe who found out an hidden ſenſe in all his fables, and who judged that he muſt have been very knowing in natural philoſophy, becauſe he mentions ſun, wind, rain, and thunder; for which you laugh at POLITIAN and others of his learned admirers *.

THEY who have repreſented HOMER as a great philoſopher, have made themſelves ridiculous. They who have repreſented him as the great author of polytheiſm, idolatry, and ſuperſtition, have done him wrong. Many ancient bards flouriſhed long before him. Who they were, whether the name of ORPHEUS, for inſtance, was given to different perſons, like that of PHARAOH, and that of ZOROASTER very probably; whether it was derived from a Phenician or Arabian word that ſignified knowledge, as VOSSIUS thought; whether no ſuch man as ORPHEUS ever exiſted, as ARISTOTLE thought; or whether the verſes aſcribed to him were writ by a certain Cecrops †, as the Pythagoricians pretended, it matters little. We may reaſon in this caſe much as TULLY does about ATLAS, PROMETHEUS, and CE-

* Pref. to the Iliad. † CIC. De nat. deor. lib. i.

PHEUS;

PHEUS*; and we may conclude that the fabulous anecdotes, with which old traditions were crowded, about ORPHEUS, to mention the moſt famous only, and the doctrines he taught, and the myſteries he inſtituted, prove at leaſt thus much, that Egyptian theology and many of thoſe ſuperſtitions had been imported into Greece long before HOMER lived. We may eaſily figure to ourſelves with what advantages this theology and theſe ſuperſtitions were introduced among the rude, illiterate, and at that time half-ſavage Greeks, from a nation as famous as the Egyptian, and by men, whether Egyptians, Phenicians, or Greeks, who had been the ſcholars of prieſts, prophets, ſeers, and magicians; of holy men who ſaw viſions, and dreamed dreams, and enjoyed every ſort of divine communication in a country where dynaſties of gods had ruled ſo long. PLATO had the front, in a much more enlightened ſtate of Greece, to publiſh his own whimſies, or thoſe of PYTHAGORAS, in his Timæus, on the faith of men begotten by gods, and therefore well acquainted with their fathers. Might not theſe miſſionary poets, or their maſters, paſs for ſuch ſons of the gods in the dark ages we refer to? Or might not that divine fury, the ſure mark of inſpiration, be aſcribed to them, which was believed to ſeize the ſibyls, and which ſeized the prophets and ſons of the prophets among the Jews, nay even thoſe who happened to fall in their way, as, we learn from

* Tuſcul. quæſt. lib. v.

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the bible, that it ſeized not only SAUL, but even the men he had ſent to take DAVID.

WE may believe that HOMER's predeceſſors went about ſinging their ſpiritual and moral canticles, philoſophical rhapſodies, and heroical ballads, as tradition reports that he did after them. What became of their hymns or canticles we know not, whether any where preſerved, or when they were loſt. But loſt they were; which the ſcattered fragments of his works had been likewiſe, if they had not fallen by accident into the hands of LYCURGUS, as PLUTARCH, whom you cite for this fact, relates; and if SOLON had not perfected the compilation of them, as DIOGENES LAERTIUS relates, whom I wiſh you had cited likewiſe, to ſhew that the two greateſt legiſlators of Greece publiſhed the two firſt editions of HOMER. In this manner his writings became the ſole repertory to later ages of all the theology, philoſophy, and hiſtory of thoſe which preceded his. All the ſcribblers of Greece imitated, and pillaged them, and none more than PLATO.

SOLON had ſtudied philoſophy in Egypt under the two moſt celebrated prieſts of Heliopolis and Sais, and had learned even the atlantic language, according to the report of PLATO. This conſideration might influence the legiſlator ſtrongly in favor of a poet, who had been ſkilled in the political, mythological, and every other part of Egyptian knowledge, above three centuries before

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he went to that ſchool for inſtruction. But the general reputation of Egyptian wiſdom, the beauty of thoſe poems wherein they found, or imagined that they found, ſo much of it interſperſed, and the loſs perhaps of what their firſt poetical reformers had committed to writing, if they writ any thing, might raiſe the eſteem for HOMER among all the Greek philoſophers to that exorbitant and even ridiculous height, to which in fact it roſe. As ſoon as the rage of making complete ſyſtems of philoſophy, wherein theology and legiſlative knowledge had always a principal ſhare, began to be the prevailing mode in Greece, every ſyſtem-maker thought it neceſſary to be armed with the authority of HOMER: and they did, for this purpoſe, the ſame thing by his writings, that, St. JEROM ſays ſomewhere or other, was done by the ſacred writings, every one endeavoured to drag them to his ſenſe, even when they were contrary to it. "Scripturas trahere repugnantes."

THE poems of HOMER, and the whole pagan theology, like embroidered or painted curtains, coarſely wrought by ſuperſtition firſt, and afterwards enriched and heightened in their coloring by the imaginations of poets, hid the true ſcene, wherein the principles of natural theology are to be found, from vulgar ſight, which they amuſed with gaudy and groteſque figures, out of the proportions and forms of nature, divine or human, inſtead of ſhewing this ſcene in that ſimplicity, in which it will appear to every ſober eye.

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The true ſcene, wherein the principles of natural theology are to be found, was ſignified perhaps in that remarkable inſcription on a temple at Sais, which PLUTARCH mentions, however differently that may have been interpreted. I AM ALL THAT HAS BEEN, IS, AND SHALL BE, AND MY VEIL NO MORTAL HAS EVER YET REMOVED. This veil repreſented the works of God, in which and by which alone he is to be diſcovered, as far as he has thought fit to communicate any knowledge of himſelf. Beyond this veil the eye of human reaſon can diſcover nothing. By the help of theſe images we may form a juſt and clear notion of the different ways by which men run into error on this important ſubject: the generality, by neglecting to contemplate God in the works of God: philoſophers, by attempting to remove the veil, to contemplate God in his nature and eſſence, not in his works alone. The vulgar perſonified, deified, and worſhipped, the works, without looking up to the worker, as their poets had taught them: the generation of the viſible world was to them a generation of inviſible gods; for they had taken ideas of power and wiſdom, of good and evil, from the phænomena: and they perſonified and deified not only theſe, but affections, paſſions, and almoſt every complex mode that the human mind can frame. When they were in this profuſe mood of deification, we cannot wonder if they deified thoſe men from whom they had received great benefits, nor if tutelary heroes became tutelary gods. Some of the philoſophers, having

been led by a more full and accurate contemplation of nature to the knowledge of a Supreme ſelf-exiſtent Being, of infinite power and wiſdom, and the firſt cauſe of all things, were not contented with this degree of knowledge. They would explain, they would even analyſe, the divine nature. They made a ſyſtem of God's moral as well as phyſical attributes, by which to account for the proceedings of his providence: and reaſoning thus beyond all their ideas, by a certain agitation and ferment of the mind, they remained in the labyrinths of abſurdity they had formed; acknowledging the exiſtence of this Monad, this Unity, elevated above all eſſence and all intelligence, and yet neglecting to worſhip him; conforming to the practice of idolatry, tho' not to the doctrines of polytheiſm.

But how true ſoever all this may be, and much more to the ſame effect that might be added, yet the great principle that maintained all the corruptions of natural religion, was that of prieſtcraft. Philoſophers and prieſts were the ſame perſons long, as I imagine that bards and philoſophers had been before: and when they aſſumed their diſtinct characters, the prieſts were too powerful, and the people too bigoted, to hope for any reformation. An oppoſition to the groſſeſt ſuperſtition, or a diſbelief of that rabble of the ſky, thoſe gods of different ranks and different employments, thoſe celeſtial huſbands and wives, fathers and children, brothers and ſiſters, would have

have paſſed for atheiſm; and the beſt of men would have been reputed atheiſts, and have been treated accordingly, as SOCRATES was. It was in theſe countries then, as it is in ſeveral countries now. Nothing was too abſurd for ſtupid credulity to receive; nor for artifice, emboldened by ſucceſs, to impoſe. Sham miracles were ſhewn, like other falſe wares, in a proper light, and at a proper diſtance; and thoſe errors, which had contracted the ruſt of antiquity, became, for that reaſon alone, venerable. In ſhort, the whole ſcheme of religion was applied then, as it is in many countries, Chriſtian and others, ſtill, to the advantage of thoſe who had the conduct of it. The worſhip of one God, and the ſimplicity of natural religion, would not ſerve their turn. Gods were multiplied, that devotions, and all the profitable rites and ceremonies which belong to them, might be ſo too. The inviſible MITHRAS would have been of little value, without the viſible, to the magi: and a calf or a cat, nay garlic or onions, were more lucrative divinities in Lower Egypt, than KNEPH had ever been in the Upper.

BUT farther: it was not the firſt philoſophy alone that was thus corrupted, but every other part of ſcience that could be wreſted and miſapplied to the ſame purpoſes. The prieſthood held it, in Egypt and in the other countries from whence the Greeks derived their knowledge, to be a maxim of eccleſiaſtical policy, and a wiſe

one it was, to keep every part of ſcience, like a monopoly, in their own hands, and to be of ſome real uſe to mankind in that manner at leaſt. On this principle, they cultivated arithmetic and geometry. Arithmetic might be of uſe to them in order to calculate the number of their gods and demons, or the revenues they enjoyed; which was no eaſy taſk: geometry might help them to ſet out the bounds of their poſſeſſions, and ſerve to other temporal purpoſes; for they had not yet diſcovered, as ſome modern writers have done, how well geometry may be applied to prove the immortality of the ſoul, and to the ſolution of other metaphyſical and theological problems. But they had ſtill more uſe for phyſic and aſtronomy, to both of which they applied themſelves with induſtry and ſucceſs, and both of which they made ſubſervient to their great deſign. "Medicina animi," phyſic for the ſoul, was the title of ſome books of MERCURY, that were carried in the famous proceſſion deſcribed by CLEMENT of Alexandria. It may be, that the principles and rules of theurgic magic were laid down in thoſe ſacred writings, and that the Egyptian prieſts pretended to raiſe themſelves and others, by the obſervation of theſe rules, to ſuch a communion with the gods, as to employ their divine power and knowledge whenever they were neceſſary. But the phyſic converſant about bodily ſubſtances only produced another ſort of magic, which may be called natural, ſince it conſiſted in this, that the effects

effects of cauſes very natural were aſcribed by ignorant people, not indeed always and abſolutely, to a ſupernatural power, but always to a power and knowledge above thoſe of any other men than their magicians; and that a good chemiſt was deemed, like our friar BACON, a conjurer. Thus again aſtronomy, which had been cultivated long under the name of aſtrology, dwindled into that contemptible ſcience which is at this day ſo juſtly diſtinguiſhed from it. From conſidering the motions, men grew attentive to the ſuppoſed influences of the ſtars; and that ridiculous ſcene of fraud opened itſelf, which continues ſtill to impoſe in the eaſt, where aſtrologers, who cannot make an almanac, govern princes and nations, by pretending to read their deſtinies in the ſky.

THE whole ſyſtem of mythology and Pagan theology was ſo abſurd, that it could not have been introduced into common belief, if it had not begun to be ſo, like other abſurd ſyſtems of religion, in times of the darkeſt ignorance, and among creatures as irrational as Groenlanders Samojedes, or Hottentots; if, after that error and knowledge growing up together, the former had not outgrown the other, and maintained itſelf againſt the improvements of human reaſon and of knowledge, by the force of habit; and finally, if legiſlators had not thought it dangerous to cure, and uſeful to confirm, ſuperſtition: and yet, after all, much art was neceſſary

to keep it in repute, beſides the craft, that has been already mentioned, as well as to make it anſwer the deſign of legiſlators.

Allegories that paſſed for facts, the fraud of oracles, the impertinence of parables that pretended to ſome meaning, and of fables that pointed at none, except it was to encourage vice by the example of their gods, compoſed an outward religion, ſupported a ridiculous worſhip, and ſerved to amuſe the vulgar; for in divine matters, the marvellous, the improbable, nay, the impoſſible and the unintelligible, make the ſtrongeſt impreſſions on vulgar minds. It has been ſaid that myſteries are deſigned to exerciſe our faith, and allegories our underſtanding: but nothing can be more fooliſhly ſaid. A myſtery, that is, a thing unknown, may exerciſe our underſtanding juſt as well as our faith, and can in truth exerciſe neither. We may have faith in an authority we know, but it is faith in this authority, and not properly in the myſtery, which makes us acquieſce in it. An allegory may be contrived to puzzle and perplex the underſtanding, or to hold out nothing to us but itſelf. In the firſt caſe it is impertinent, in the ſecond it is fraudulent, and in both it perverts the ſole uſe it ſhould be employed for, in the didactic, or even in the poetical ſtyle. Such allegories become, at beſt, and when they have really ſome meaning, a ſort of riddles: they are fit to exerciſe the ſagacity, and to be the intellectual amuſement of children alone; and yet they have been

been the pride of great genii. JOSEPHUS, who was a Jew and a cabaliſt, admired them much: and he tells a ſilly ſtory, on the authority of MENANDER of Epheſus, to give them credit, or to raiſe our ideas of the wiſdom of SOLOMON, HIRAM, and ABDEMON. The two firſt had, it ſeems, a curious correſpondence, in which they propoſed riddles to one another; and the Tyrian paid moſt of the forfeits, till ABDEMON taught him to poſe the wiſeſt of men. PLATO *, who diſgraced philoſophy as much as HOMER elevated poetry, by the uſe of allegory, declared that this poet, whom he baniſhed in another mood out of his commonwealth, ſhould not be read by any who were not initiated in wiſdom; that is, who were not able to draw an hidden ſenſe out of his writings; that is, who were not able to make their own inventions paſs for the ſignification of his fables, and the interpretation of his allegories. Allegory, in the true intention of it, is deſigned to make clearer as well as ſtronger impreſſions on the mind; and, therefore, as they who pretend to foretel future events ſhould be ſuſpected of impoſture when they deliver their predictions, like thoſe who governed the oracles of the heathen world, in obſcure and equivocal terms, that may be applied afterwards, as they often were, to different and even contrary events; ſo they, who pretend to teach divine truths in allegorical, ſymbolical, or any myſterious language, deſerve to be ſuſpected of im-

* In ALCIB.

poſture likewiſe. There may be good reaſons for concealing, there can never be any ſuch for diſguiſing, which is a degree of falſifying, truth. If men reaſoned a little better than they do commonly, and were a little leſs blinded by prejudices, they would not be ſuch bubbles as to receive on one authority what comes to them really on another. The obſcure prophecy, and the abſtruſe doctrine, when one is interpreted, and the other explained, are not ſo properly the prophecy of the prophet, nor the doctrine of the doctor, as they are ſuch of the perſons who apply the prophecy to ſome particular event, and determine the doctrine to ſome particular ſenſe, neither of which was poſſibly intended by them.

RAPIN ſays, in his compariſon of PLATO and ARISTOTLE, that the ſymbolical theology of the Egyptians ſeemed to them the moſt reſpectful manner of treating divine ſubjects; and he quotes JAMBLICHUS for this obſervation, that they thought themſelves obliged to imitate nature on theſe occaſions, who hides the perfections of the mind under the outward veil of the body. Now the firſt of theſe excuſes will appear ridiculous enough, if we refer it only to the opinions of men. But if we refer it to any divine revelation, it is ſtill more egregiouſly abſurd. The laſt is an allegorical excuſe for allegory, worthy of JAMBLICHUS, and little worthy of a remark. But the jeſuit gives, in the ſame paragraph, the true and univerſal reaſon, ſo univerſal and ſo true,

true, that I wonder at him for giving it, of all figurative theology. "The prieſts, he ſays, "who had the keeping of theſe myſteries, autho-"riſed this method to ſupport their credit, and "to draw veneration to themſelves by the re-"ſpect for thoſe holy things, which they hid "from the eyes of the people that they might "not be profaned."

I CANNOT let this ſubject go, without taking notice of what my lord BACON ſays upon it, in the preface to his treatiſe, which he calls De ſapientia, and might have called more properly De futilitate, ſive de inſania, veterum. In that he makes parables and allegories ſo eſſential to religion, that he affirms, that to take them away is to forbid almoſt all commerce of things divine and human*. Whatever reaſons this great author had to make ſuch a declaration, it was raſhly made. The expreſſion is allegorical, but the meaning of it is obvious; and therefore I ſay, that as far as man is concerned in carrying this commerce on, we are juſtified in ſuſpecting it of enthuſiaſm or fraud; ſince allegory has been always a principal inſtrument of theological deception. The chancellor admits, that it ſerves to involve and conceal, "ad involucrum et velum," which is in direct contradiction to it's proper uſe, for that is to enlighten and illuſtrate, "ad lu-"men et illuſtrationem." He choſe to ſay no-

* ——cum ejuſmodi velis et umbris religio gaudeat, ut qui eas tollat, commercia divinorum et humanorum fere interdicat.

thing of the former, rather than to be engaged in diſputes, "potius, quam lites ſuſcipiamus," and we may add, rather than offend the clergy. For me, who think it much better not to write at all, than to write under any reſtraint from delivering the whole truth of things as it appears to me; who ſhould think ſo, if I was able to write and go to the bottom of every ſubject as well as he; and who have no cavils nor invectives to fear, when I confine the communication of my thoughts to you and a very few friends, as I do in writing theſe eſſays; I ſhall repeat what I have ſaid already, that the philoſopher or divine, who pretends to inſtruct others by allegorical expreſſions without an immediate, direct, and intelligible application of the allegory to ſome propoſition or other, has nothing in his thoughts but the ſuppoſed allegory; and is mad enough to deceive himſelf, or knave enough to attempt to impoſe on thoſe he pretends to inſtruct. If he has any thing there which he diſtruſts, and dares not venture to expoſe naked and ſtripped of allegory to the undazzled eye of reaſon, it is too much even to inſinuate in ſuch a caſe, and eſpecially on ſubjects of the firſt philoſophy. We may compare ſuch theology as this to thoſe artificial beauties, who hide their defects under dreſs and paint: "pars minima eſt ipſa puella "ſui."

If we ſuppoſe the Supreme Being concerned in this commerce, as it is called, we ſuppoſe what

what is very profane and audacious. I apply my lord BACON's words, "profanum quiddam "ſonat et audax." Can any thing be more ſo, than a ſuppoſition that the God of truth communicates with men by a wretched human expedient, contrived by them to deceive one another, or to help their imperfect faculties in the conception of things, and in the expreſſion of their conceptions? TULLY * entertained, in this very reſpect, much more worthy notions of the divine nature. He argues againſt the vanity of divination by dreams, in anſwer to his brother, on this principle. If they come from the gods, they are ſent for the ſake of man: and if they are ſent for the ſake of man, we ought to believe that all ſuch advertiſements muſt be intelligible to man †. Obſcure dreams therefore cannot be ſuch advertiſements. They would be repugnant to the majeſty of the gods §. When God ſpeaks to his creature, it will be always in terms plain and preciſe. "Hoc ne feceris. Hoc fa- "cito." Thou ſhalt have none other gods but me. Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. The Stoics thought to evade this objection againſt divination by dreams, when they ſet up their ſage, that ideal being, for the ſole diviner ‡.

* De Divin. lib. ii.

† Intelligi a nobis dii velle debebant ea, quae noſtra nos monebant. Ibid.

§ Obſcura ſomnia minime conſentanea ſunt majeſtati deorum. Ibid.

‡ ——Stoici autem tui negant quemquam, niſi ſapientem, divinum eſſe poſſe. Cic. De divin. lib. ii.

But TULLY laughed at all theſe pretenſions to a ſupernatural virtue and knowledge, which CHRYSIPPUS made neceſſary to divination. He affirmed he knew no perſon who had them; and concluded from thence, that if he ſhould allow divination, there would be no one found to divine *. Thus may we laugh too, and affirm on long experience, that, if we allowed theological allegory to come from God, with all the pretended types, ſymbols, and ſigns, there would be no one found to interpret it, ſo as to fix the ſenſe of it indiſputably: and yet, if the ſenſe be not indiſputably fixed, human impoſture may paſs for divine revelation, and the word of man for the word of God.

IF I would enter into ſuch a detail, in this place, it would be eaſy to collect almoſt innumerable examples out of Jewiſh and Chriſtian writers, to excuſe the laugh, and to juſtify the affirmation. But inſtead of that, I ſhall content myſelf with giving one or two inſtances, that occur to my memory, of the uſe that was made of interpretations of allegory in the pagan theology.

STROBOEUS has preſerved a paſſage of PORPHYRY, which ſhews that the Pythagoricians labored to diſcover the hidden ſenſe of HOMER, who had ſpoke more darkly about gods and demons than any of the ancients, in order to confirm or improve their own theology by his: and he

* —— Vide igitur, ne etiamſi divinationem tibi eſſe conceſſero——neminem tamen divinum reperire poſſimus. CIC. De divin. lib. ii.

quotes

quotes one of theſe philoſophers, PYTHAGOREUS CHRONIUS, who ſeemed to make the poet's doctrine conformable to his own, rather than to make his own conformable to the poet's*. But the Stoics were remarkable above all others for putting HOMER and the reſt of the poets to this uſe. HESIOD was put to the ſame uſe, and his fables and allegories ſerved to the ſame impertinent purpoſe as thoſe of HOMER did. His poem was to ſome, what he profeſſes at the entrance of it, that he intended it ſhould be, a theological rhapſody concerning the generations of gods. It was to others a mere phyſical allegory concerning the formation of the viſible world; and accordingly we find that VELLEIUS accuſes ZENO, in the firſt book Of the Nature of the Gods, of miſinterpreting HESIOD, by attributing the names of JUPITER, of JUNO, and VESTA, to inanimate beings alone. VARRO, it is ſaid, did the ſame: and thus the poem became to ſome a theogonia, and to others a coſmogonia. Another inſtance of the ſucceſs philoſophers had in their interpretations of allegories and fables, and of their end in making theſe interpretations, follows that which has been quoted: for after ſpeaking of what CHRYSIPPUS had writ in his firſt book Of the Nature of the Gods, CICERO's interlocutor adds, that this philoſopher endeavoured, in the ſecond, to accommodate the fables of ORPHEUS, MUSAEUS, HESIOD, and HOMER, to what he had advanced, "ut etiam veterrimi poëtae, qui haec ne ſuſpicati quidem ſint,

* Nec tam ſe ad poëtae opiniones, quam poëtam ad ſuas accommodare nititur.

"Stoici

" Stoici fuiſſe videantur," that the moſt ancient poets, who had not even a ſuſpicion that there were any ſuch doctrines, might ſeem to have been Stoicians. Such examples as theſe are ſo far appoſite, that they ſerve to ſhew how ill fitted allegory is to preſerve the true ſenſe of any doctrine, and that an allegorical ſyſtem is eaſily made a noſe of wax, to be turned any way that the interpreters of it pleaſe.

WHILST paganiſm was thus muffled up in allegory, to amuſe the vulgar, and to maintain and propagate ſuperſtition, another art, in ſome degree the reverſe of this, was employed to promote the true ends of natural religion, and the more effectual reformation of the manners of men. The art I mean is that which inſtituted rites and ceremonies to be performed, and doctrines, to which they were relative, to be taught, in ſecret. Ancient writers, Pagans and Chriſtians, ſpeak much of theſe myſteries, for ſuch they were called: the former with veneration, the latter often with an abhorrence, that little became thoſe who imitated them in ſo many inſtances, and who ſuffered their own myſterious rites to run eaſily into the very ſame abuſes, into which the others degenerated late. To attempt a minute and circumſtantial account of theſe myſteries, and even to ſeem to give it, would require much greater knowledge of antiquity than I pretend to have, or would take the trouble of acquiring. They who attempt it have been, and always will be, ridiculouſly and vainly

vainly employed, whilſt they treat this ſubject as if they had aſſiſted at the celebration of theſe myſteries, or had at leaſt been drivers of the aſs who carried the machines and implements that ſerved in the celebration of them. They write dogmatically about things which could not be known authentically, nor in a detail of particulars, at the time they were in practice. DIAGORAS, the Melian, was proſcribed at * Athens for revealing, or pretending to reveal them: and the poet AESCHYLUS † had like to have been maſſacred on a bare ſuſpicion, that the people took, at a repreſentation of one of his plays, of ſomething which alluded to them. In a word, theſe rites were kept ſecret under the ſevereſt penalties above two thouſand years ago. How can we hope to have them revealed to us now, by the help of tradition, or hiſtory, wherein we find the relations of other things, which were of public notoriety much later, ſo imperfect and dubious? I pretend therefore to nothing more than the mention of a few general notions concerning theſe myſteries, which ſeem probable to me: whatever weight you lay upon them, about which I am not over ſolicitous, they will be ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe, and for your information. They will ſerve to ſhew how men came nearer and nearer to the knowledge of the true God, and a more rational worſhip.

THE theology and the mythology of the heathen world were no doubt vaſtly increaſed by

* SUIDAS. † CLEM. ALEX. Strom. lib. ii.

poets,

poets, who indulged their imaginations, without any other view perhaps, than the ornament of their works; and by philoſophers, who, having, like PLATO, more imagination than knowledge, endeavoured to conceal their ignorance under the veil of allegorical phyſics and chimerical metaphyſics. Thus gods and demons, and other hypothetical beings, were multiplied. Feſtivals and public devotions multiplied with them. Superſtition ſpread, and external religion, which was made up of nothing elſe, floriſhed. But they, who inſtituted religion for the ſake of government, ſaw that ſuch religion as this would not be ſufficient alone to anſwer their end, nor enforce effectually the obligations of public and private morality. It looked no farther than the preſent ſyſtem of things, and in this they obſerved no ſettled diſtinction made by their gods between the religious and the irreligious, the beſt and the worſt of men. It was not ſufficient, they thought, therefore, either to juſtify the providence of the gods, or to determine the conduct of men. The imaginary unjuſt diſtribution of good and evil had been at all times a great ſtumbling block to theiſtical philoſophers: and we ſee accordingly that hypotheſes, contrived to ſolve the difficulty, had obtained in an antiquity beyond our oldeſt traditions. Such was that of the good and evil principle. Such was that of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and of a metempſychoſis. Now what they had put to a philoſophical, they put to a political uſe: and the laſt of

theſe

theſe was at leaſt one principal, and I ſuppoſe the principal, doctrine taught in the myſteries that they inſtituted.

THE myſteries of ISIS and thoſe of MITHRAS ſeem to have been the moſt ancient: and the former were thoſe which INACHUS and ORPHEUS carried into Greece. What they were in their original inſtitution; how they were propagated in ſeveral countries under the invocation, to uſe an expreſſion of your church, of different divinities; what alterations from one to another they received; or how thoſe of Eleuſis came to be more univerſal and more revered than the reſt, I am unable to tell; and you, I believe, not much concerned to know. But if you aſk me how they came to be called myſteries, tho' their principal doctrine, the doctrine of a future ſtate, was publicly known as I think it was, my anſwer is ready. This doctrine, altho' known, and the ſolemn rites that belonged to it, were myſteries among the Pagans, juſt as the doctrines and rites of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper were myſteries in the firſt ages of the Chriſtian church. A general and confuſed notion of them tranſpired. But neither theſe doctrines, nor the myſtical rites and ceremonies, were explained even to the catechumens, and much leſs to others. Nay, the whole inward doctrine of the euchariſty was not opened to all thoſe who received it, to thoſe whom St. AUSTIN calls tardiores: and the reaſon he gives for this reſerve is, that they might not deſpiſe what

they ſaw, "ne contemnant quod vident." He thought, it ſeems, that no explanation would prevent this ſo effectually as an air of myſtery maintained by the figurative and enigmatical terms in which the fathers affected to ſpeak on all ſuch ſubjects to the public. This precaution was carried ſo far, that a curtain was drawn to hide the altar and the prieſt from the ſight of the congregation, when he was about to conſecrate, as I remember to have read in ſome of your writers. Several ages paſſed, before the paſtors of the church thought it ſafe to let the people know, that a few genuflexions, a few ſigns of the croſs, a few thumps on the breaſt, and the muttering of a few words, were ſufficient to draw God down from heaven, and to tranſubſtantiate bread and wine into his fleſh and blood.

THIS air of myſtery produced not only the negative good that has been mentioned, it produced likewiſe a poſitive good of much conſequence. The Chriſtian fathers found it neceſſary, on one hand, to admit converts through ſeveral ſtages of preparation into the church; and, on the other, to keep up the fervor of theſe candidates for regeneration, and the conſequence of it, ſalvation. The expedient of myſtery anſwered both purpoſes. It kept them out of the whole ſecret, as long as that was neceſſary: and it excited in the mean time their curioſity, and holy impatience, to be in it. St. AUSTIN, who mentions the firſt, mentions the ſecond purpoſe. He ſpeaks, in one of his

his epiſtles, of the public prayers made to God, that he would inſpire the catechumens with a deſire of regeneration; "ut eis deſiderium regene-" rationis inſpiraret:" and in another part of his works, he avows the human means that were employed for a very human reaſon, a reaſon drawn from the weakneſs of the human mind. He ſays, that altho' the catechumens could have borne a communication of the ſacraments to them, this was not done however, that the more honorably theſe ſacraments were hid, the more earneſtly this communication might be deſired by them. "Etſi "catechumenis ſacramenta fidelium non produn-"tur; non ideo fit, quod ea ferre non poſſunt; "ſed ut ab eis tanto ardentius concupiſcantur, "quanto honorabilius occultantur."

OTHER authorities might be cited, and other inſtances produced, if they were neceſſary; for this was the general policy of the Chriſtian church. But there is no need of any authority to confirm that of St. AUSTIN, in ſuch a caſe as this: and the two inſtances I have brought are ſufficient to ſhew for what reaſons myſtery was eſtabliſhed in the heathen devotions, by ſhewing thoſe for which it was introduced and maintained in the Chriſtian devotions. The latter, in this reſpect, were copies of the former: and theſe copies, which we have in our hands, enable us to judge of the originals, which we have not.

THE Chriſtians, the primitive Chriſtians them-

ſelves, could not revere their ſacred myſteries more than the Pagans did theirs. They could not prepare for them, nor aſſiſt at them, with greater attention of mind, with greater purity of heart, nor with greater reverence and awe, than the Pagans prepared for and aſſiſted at theirs. The Pagans confeſſed their crimes: and they went through public and private purgations, which we may call penitences, long before they could be admitted to initiation: ſuch, for inſtance, as abſtinence from women and from ſeveral ſorts of food, with different auſterities that are mentioned by PORPHYRY, and that writer of Mileſian tales, APULEIUS: after which the public proclamation, "Procul ite profani," and the private examination of every one who preſented himſelf, "An "purus ades?" followed conſtantly. No man who was noted for crimes durſt be a candidate for initiation: and NERO, as much an emperor and a tyrant as he was, durſt not preſent himſelf as ſuch, after he had killed his mother. We find the diſpoſitions, and the manner, in which they were required to aſſiſt at theſe myſterious rites and ceremonies, deſcribed in terms that might edify the moſt pious and orthodox ears. Let me quote the firſt that occurs to me, tho' it is not the ſtrongeſt that might be produced with the pains of a little ſearch. The paſſage is in that oration which TULLY made on the occaſion of ſome anſwers given by the haruſpices, whom the ſenate had conſulted. In that oration, ſpeaking of thoſe myſteries which CLODIUS had polluted, and exag-

gerating

gerating the crime, he takes notice that they were ſuch as forbid not only curious, but even wandering eyes, and excluded not only the wicked, but the imprudent. "Non ſolum curioſos oculos "excludit, ſed etiam errantes—quo non modo "improbitas, ſed ne imprudentia quidem, poſſit "intrare." Such was the general character, ſuch the particular behaviour, required of the perſons initiated into theſe ſacred myſteries: and the excitements to the obſervation of all that was thus required could not be greater; ſince they are ſummed up by TULLY, who had been initiated himſelf, in this; that the initiated learned how to live with joy, and to die with better hopes; "cum laetitia vivendi rationem, et cum ſpe me-"liore moriendi*." They were raiſed "ad "præſentiam et participationem deorum," ſays JAMBLICHUS: a bleſſing which the Egyptians firſt enjoyed, according to him. Their ſouls were purged and purified, till they became ſuch as they had been in their original ſtate, and before their deſcent into the priſon of the body. When they left the body, they took their flight at once to the iſlands of the bleſſed; nay, they became gods, or like to gods, according to ſome ſeraphic doctors of Platonician divinity: whilſt thoſe of the profane, unpurged, unpurified, and clogged by the groſs affections of the body, ſtuck in dirt and wallowed in mire †.

* CIC. De leg. lib. ii.

† In coeno et luto volutari. DIOG. LAERT.

SECT. IV.

IT is eaſy to conceive, by this ſhort account of the heathen myſteries, how well this inward religion, for ſuch I may call it in contradiſtinction to vulgar paganiſm, was calculated to form ſome particular men to virtue and piety, and to promote by conſequence ſo far the good of ſociety, which was the great end of the firſt legiſlators, by means more reaſonable than thoſe of vulgar religion. The celebration of theſe myſteries laſted ſeveral days, and returned often enough to afford frequent opportunities of initiation to thoſe of both ſexes who were deſirous of it, as well as of confirmation and improvement to thoſe who had been already initiated. Leſſons of morality were thus frequently renewed, habits of piety were ſolemnly maintained; and, to enforce them all, that great ſanction, which conſiſts in the rewards and puniſhments of another life, and which had been added very wiſely to the law of nature by human inſtitution, and in belief at leaſt, if not originally and by divine inſtitution, was inculcated ſo, that every man muſt apply it to himſelf, and the impreſſion be laſting.

IT may be ſaid, perhaps, that no reformation of manners, no degree of virtue and piety, beyond thoſe which vulgar paganiſm was ſufficient to procure, can be juſtly aſcribed to theſe inſtitutions; whereas they maintained much, at leaſt, of the ſame rank polytheiſm in belief, and the ſame rank idolatry

idolatry in practice. If this be ſaid, the objection will be eaſily anſwered, as far as it relates to the effect they had, by running a parallel, as I ſhall do in another eſſay, between Pagan and Chriſtian reformation of manners: for if it appears, as I think it will, that the latter has in this reſpect, on the whole, no advantage to boaſt above the former, ſome reformation muſt be allowed to have been wrought by the Pagan ſyſtem of religion; after which there can remain no diſpute whether this reformation was owing to the inward and hidden, rather than to the outward and public, part of this ſyſtem.

But I conſider here the theology and religion of the Heathen with regard to their nature, not to their effects: and I ſhall proceed therefore to obſerve, that by the myſteries hitherto ſpoken of I mean only ſuch as are called the leſſer, and as ſeem to have been preparatory to the greater, which remain to be ſpoken of. There were certain ſtages thro' which men were admitted by ſlow ſteps into the whole myſtery of Chriſtianity. So they were admitted likewiſe into that of Heatheniſm. The firſt legiſlators contented themſelves to eſtabliſh a vulgar religion, in compliance with the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the ſavage vulgar. But they prepared, at the ſame time, the means of ſupplying it's defects, and of leading men little by little, and by ſuch a progreſſion as their different talents and characters rendered them capable of making, to a better knowledge of natural theology and natural

tural religion, from fiction to truth, from allegory to that which allegory was intended to ſignify. There was a ſtate of purgation, a ſtate of initiation, and a ſtate of conſummation. The two firſt were, I believe, thoſe of the leſſer, and the laſt that of the greater, myſteries.

He who has been curious to examine the religious notions of rude, ignorant, and half-ſtupid people, in the pale of the Chriſtian church, as well as out of it, will not be apt to wonder that there were many in the Heathen world who remained contented with the vulgar religion, and little curious about the myſteries; nor that they were led rather by example, than by reflection, to initiation, when it became almoſt as general among them as baptiſm is among us; and to the belief of a future ſtate. Now ſuch as theſe might have been revolted againſt the myſteries, if they had found the gods they were accuſtomed to adore wholly degraded in them. Theſe gods, therefore, were to keep their places in ſome ſort "ſuus cuique "honos;" tho' many fabulous ſtories about them were exploded, or elſe were repreſented as allegories, not facts, and explained in a better ſenſe. The doctrine too of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments would have made leſs impreſſion on ſuch minds, perhaps, if it had not been taught to the eyes, as well as to the ears, by ſolemn ceremonies and pompous ſhews. Ceremonies, therefore, and ſhews ſeem to have been inſtituted, and to have been made parts of theſe myſteries. But then

then there were other perſons, and the number of theſe increaſed as philoſophy came to be more and more cultivated, who could not bear to have the abſurdities of polytheiſm, however mitigated, impoſed upon them in any ſort, nor think it religion to worſhip men who had been made gods by poetical licence, with all their vices about them. They could not aſſiſt at the ridiculous rites of idolatry, nor be ſpectators of all the puppet-ſhews of devotion, without being provoked to laughter or to indignation.

I CAN eaſily believe, that the fooliſh creeds, and the burleſque rites of Paganiſm were rendered, in the preparatory myſteries, a little leſs ſhocking to the common ſenſe of thoſe in whom knowledge began to get the better of prejudice. But this reformation and improvement could not be carried far at once. Allegory ſerved to diſguiſe ignorance, and to muffle up even knowledge in myſtery among the vulgar. To cure this abuſe, to take off theſe maſks, and to lay allegory aſide whenever it did not ſerve to illuſtrate truth, and to improve or facilitate knowledge, required time: and men, who had been bred in darkneſs, were to be accuſtomed to the light by degrees. This I imagine that the myſteries did, and were contrived to do. If too much light had been let in at once upon the initiated, they would have been dazzled and hurt by it. Rather than ſuffer the groſſeſt objects of their ſuperſtition to be ſuddenly removed, theſe idiots might have clung to them the more

more cloſely: juſt as we have ſeen in France, that popular tumults have ariſen when ſome biſhops have attempted to take away images, and to forbid devotions in which the common people had been too long indulged by the connivance or by the fraud of their paſtors. On the other hand, the reformation of vulgar religion, which was wrought by the leſſer myſteries, was too little certainly for thoſe who were able to frame true notions of a Supreme Being, and of the worſhip due to him from his creatures. Thus it became neceſſary to make a ſort of political compoſition with error: it became neceſſary for the inſtitutors of religions to ſeparate the few from the many, and to carry the firſt on alone from initiation to conſummation, from the leſſer to the greater myſteries. There are good, and I think ſufficient, grounds to be perſuaded that the whole ſyſtem of polytheiſm was unravelled in the greater myſteries, or that no more of it was retained than what might be rendered conſiſtent with monotheiſm, with the belief of one Supreme ſelf-exiſtent Being. Now, on the principles on which this was done, ſome of the eſtabliſhed ceremonies of vulgar religion might ſeem quite innocent, and others might be tolerated. Some indulgence, and even a kind of occaſional conformity to them, could not be ſafely refuſed in countries where ſuch ſuperſtitions had long prevailed, where they were incorporated into the very frame of government, and where powerful bodies of men had a particular intereſt in the ſupport of them.

The end of the Firſt volume.